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“When I consider what some books have done for the world, and what they are doing, how they keep up our hope, awaken new courage and faith, give an ideal life to those whose hours are cold and hard, bind together distant ages and foreign lands, create new worlds of beauty, bring down truth from heaven : I give eternal blessings for this gift, and thank God for books.”

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KAAPSE BIBLIOFIELE EN HULLE BOEKE
IN DIE 18^e EEU*deur*

R. F. M. IMMELMAN

Hoofbibliotekaris, Universiteit van Kaapstad

GEWOONLIK begin enige bespreking van biblioteek-geskiedenis in Suid-Afrika met die stigting in 1818 van die Suid-Afrikaanse Biblioteek in Kaapstad, aangesien daar binne 'n korte tydperk daarna baie klein openbare bibliotekies dwarsdeur die land tot stand gekom het. Maar geen biblioteek val somar skielik uit die lug uit nie. Dus kom die vraag vanselfsprekend op : wat was die aard van boekgebruik voor 1818, d.w.s. sedert die volksplanting aan die Kaap in 1652 ? In hoe 'n mate het boeke toe voorgekom ? Wie het boeke besit ? Watter soorte boeke het die burgers hier besit en geles ? As ons die antwoorde op sulke vrae kan aandui al is dit maar naasteby, sal dit bydra tot 'n duideliker beeld van die aard van die voorgeskiedenis van biblioteek-ontwikkeling in ons land.

Die eerste nedersetters was hoofsaaklik soldate en amptenare wat hulle dienstyd hier as 'n soort ballingskap beskou het. Die eerste vryburgers het weer met die elemente en met die strenge beheer van die Hollands Oos-Indiese Kompanjie en sy plaaslike verteenwoordigers te kampe gehad, sodat al hulle aandag en tyd in beslag geneem is om 'n bestaan te probeer maak. Eers met die koms van die Van der Stels, wat 'n permanente kolonie in plaas van 'n verversingspos beoog het, kom daar 'n gestadige verandering : die koloniste was ook meer gevestig ; materiële welvaart het toegeneem. Met die uitbreiding van die kolonie na Stellenbosch en Drakenstein en die koms van die Hugenote, het die toestande al hoe meer bestendig geword. Die burgers kon meer aandag aan kulturele sake wy. Onmiddelik na die aankoms van die eerste nedersetters aan die Kaap, het geskrifte ontstaan, veral in die vorm van dagboeke, reisbeskrywings, briewe en amptelike dokumente. Die *Artyckel-Brief*

(b.v. van 1658 en 1672) wat die bewindhebbers van die H.O.I.Ko. vir sy amptenare uitgereik het, het dan ook neergelê dat al hul doen en late aangeteken moes word in volledige verslae en reisjoernale wat na Here Sewentien moes afgestuur word.¹ Die *Daghregister* (1651-1662) van Jan van Riebeeck² is daar 'n bekende voorbeeld van, asook die reisbeskrywing van *Simon van der Stel* se tog na Namaqualand in 1685.³ Baie reisigers na die Ooste het hier 'n tydlang vertoef en hulle waarnemings te boekgestel, maar hoewel sodanige publikasies buite die bestek van hierdie artikel val, bewys die feit dat letterkundige werk wel aan die Kaap voorgekom het, dat sommige koloniste al vroeg in ons geskiedenis in die geskrewe woord belanggestel het: b.v. *Pieter de Neyn* wat vanaf Feb. 1672 tot Okt. 1674 fisikaal aan die Kaap was,⁴ het hier etlike geleentheidsverse geskryf, o.a. aan verskeie jong Kaapse dames op hulle verjaarsdae. Dat sy boeke tog aan die Kaap bekend was, bewys die feit dat sy "*Lusthof der Huwelijken*"⁵ onder die boeke van die Trekkers is wat in die Voortrekker-Museum, Pietermaritzburg, bewaar is.

Aangesien die drukpers eers in 1784 in Suid-Afrika ingevoer is, was die koloniste gedurende die Kompanjie se tyd vir hulle leesstof afhanklik van boeke wat van Europa ingevoer is. Dis heel waarskynlik dat reisigers en seelui, op skepe op weg na die Ooste, boeke wat hul van Holland meegebring het, dikwels hier verkoop het. Onder die amptenare en koloniste was natuurlik mense wat van baie verskillende lande gekom het. Sommige het seker 'n paar boeke saamgebring na die Kaap. Dit help om te verklaar waarom daar destyds soveel boeke in 'n verskeidenheid van tale aan die Kaap voorkom.

In die loop van die 18e eeu is dit bekend dat daar aan die Kaap 'n hele paar boekliefhebbers was wat groter of kleiner hoeveelhede boeke aangeskaf het; een of twee van hul boekerye is bewaar gebly en ander leer ons ken uit boeklyste wat in verskeie bronne opgeneem is. Om 'n insig te kry in die soort boeke wat aan die Kaap in omloop was, is dit nuttig om na te gaan wat die aard van hierdie private boekversamelings was.

As ons dan verneem wie die versamelaars was, kry ons meteen 'n duidelike beeld van die boekgebruik destyds. Ons weet dat *Adam Tas* (1668-

¹ CONRADIE, dr. E.: *Hollandse skrywers uit Suid-Afrika*. Kaapstad, H.A.U.M., 1934. Deel I: bl. 2-3

² Word uitgegee deur Van Riebeeckvereniging, Kaapstad, in April 1952, in 3 dele.

³ VAN DER STEL, Simon: *Journal of his expedition to Namaqualand, 1685-6*, ed. by dr. G. Waterhouse. London, Longmans, Green, 1932.

⁴ DE NEYN, Pieter: *Vroolijke Uren*, bestaande uit verskeide soorte van mengeldigten. Amsterdam, Bouman, 1681.

⁵ Amsterdam: 1681 en 1697.

1722) 'n boekliefhebber was. Hy het in 1697 aan die Kaap aangekom. Na hy op sy Stellenbosch-plaas gaan woon het, het hy 'n dagboek gehou,¹ waarin o.a. genoem word watter boeke hy gekoop en besit het. Vir 13 Junie 1705 lees ons dat 'n vriend vir hom saamgebring het „'t boeck behelsende 't bedrieff van de gebroeders Cornelis en Jan de Wit en elf stuks boekzalen voor desen aan Mr. Starrenburg en naderhand aan Mr. van Putten geleent", en verder „'t predikatie boek van de heer Balthasar Becker gezegender geheugenis". Tas leen dus boeke aan landdros J. Starrenburg van Stellenbosch (wat hy hom op 2 Julie herinner om terug te stuur) en aan „Monsieur" W. van Putten, lid van die Politieke Raad. Op 6 Julie 1705 lees ons weer dat hy betaal het „voor drie boeken, door mij op de vendu van den Hr. van Loons boeken gekogt."²

Dit blyk dus dat Adam Tas op hoogte probeer bly het van boeke wat in sy tyd in Europa verskyn : die verwysing na Sewel, dui op *De Boekzaal van Europa*, „maandelijksche uittreksels of boekzaal der geleerde wereld", 'n tydskrif waarvan *Willem Sewel* die samesteller was en wat gereeld verskyn het. Dit bevat aankondigings van die belangrikste nuwe publikasies in meeste Europese lande. Later verneem ons dat Joachim Nicolaas Von Dessin ook 'n leser hiervan was, want Jan de Waal was onder verpligting om gereeld „Europische Mercurius" en „De Boekzaal van Europa" aan hom te lewer.³ Die stel in die Dessiniaanse Biblioteek⁴ wat 162 dele tel, eindig met 1761, die jaar van Von Dessin se dood. Verder het Tas ook die theologiese boeke van *Balthazar Becker* gelees, skrywer van *Predicatieën* (1694) – 'n preekbundel – en *De betooverde wereld*⁵, 'n stigtelike werk wat baie populêr in daardie dae was. Hierdie uitgawe kom ook voor in Dess. Bibl. en in 'n boedel-opgaaf van 1790 word 'n later uitgawe daarvan, asook sy „De Friesche Godgeleerdheid"⁶ aangetref. Dus was Becker se werke aan die Kaap bekend nie lank na hulle in Holland verskyn het nie, en het dwarsdeur die 18e eeu in omloop gebly.

Adam Tas kan dus geld as een van die eerste bibliofiele aan die Kaap. Sommige van sy boeke word nog bewaar in die Dess. Bibl. : vermoedelik het

¹ TAS, Adam : *Het dagboek (1705–1706)*, uitgegeven door Leo Fouché. London, Longmans, Green, 1914.

² *Ibid.*: bl. 2, 4, 30.

³ FRANKEN, dr. J. L. M.: 'n Kaapse huishoue in die 18e eeu uit Von Dessin se briefboek en memoriaal. In : *Argief-jaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, IIIe Jrg. (I), 1940. bl. 68.

⁴ Hierna aangedui : Dess. Bibl.

⁵ Amsterdam, 1691.

⁶ Amsterdam, 1693.

Von Dessin hulle op 'n openbare veiling aangekoop. Maar een van die belangrike dienste wat Von Dessin vir ons bewys, is dat hy 'n afskrif van Adam Tas se dagboek laat maak het en waar die oorspronklike MS spoorloos verdwyn het, is 'n gedeelte van hierdie afskrif in sy biblioteek bewaar gebly.¹

J. N. VON DESSIN, 1703-1761

Dit bring ons vanselfsprekend by die grootste boekversamelaar gedurende die 18e eeu: *Joachim Nicolaas von Dessin*.² Hy was 'n Duitser van adellike afkoms, gebore in 1703, wat in 1727 as gewone soldaat aan die Kaap geland het. As gevolg van sy geleerdheid en bekwaamheid het hy geleidelik gestyg in die Kompanjie se diens, totdat hy in 1737 Sekretaris van die Weeskamer word. Hy was ook 'n baie goeie sakeman wat langsamerhand welgesteld geword het, soos hy dit self uitdruk: „dat ik . . . hier in dit land ten genoegte in tijdelijke goederen geseegent sijnde . . .”³ By sy werk in die Kompanjiesdiens, het hy ook 'n bybaantjie, die notarisamp, beoefen, wat sekerlik die rede was vir die groot aantal regsboeke in sy boekery. Verder het hy vreemde besoekers van die verbygaande skepe loseer en selfs 'n soort in- en uitvoerhandel, op klein skaal, gedrywe. Belangrik is veral dat hy as opgevoede man 'n wetenskaplike belangstelling in geleerdheid getoon het: „. . . ende derwyl ik een seer groote liefhebber van goede boeken soo geestelijke als historische ben . . .”⁴ *Abbé de la Caille*, wat van 1751-1753 aan die Kaap vertoef het, noem hom as een van die drie mees ontwikkelde Kapenare, waarvan Rijk Tulbagh 'n ander was. Von Dessin was 'n boekliefhebber wat op groot skaal boeke versamel het. Hy het plaaslik baie boeke op openbare veilinge aangekoop, o.a. uit boedels: b.v. in 1755 het hy 20 boeke uit die boedel van ds. Henri Beck vir 75 rixsdalers aangekoop. Hy het ook 'n reëling met vriende in Holland gehad om vir hom boeke te koop en van tyd tot tyd aan te stuur. Verder het hy boeke van vriende as geskenke ontvang: b.v. in Jan. 1755 van Jan Tileman en Jacobus Janson „dewelke aan mij verschijde kostelijke boeken” gebring het.⁵ Maar uit sy geskifte e.a. dokumente kan afgelei word dat 'n betreklik groot aantal van sy boeke hier aangekoop is. In 1822 vertel

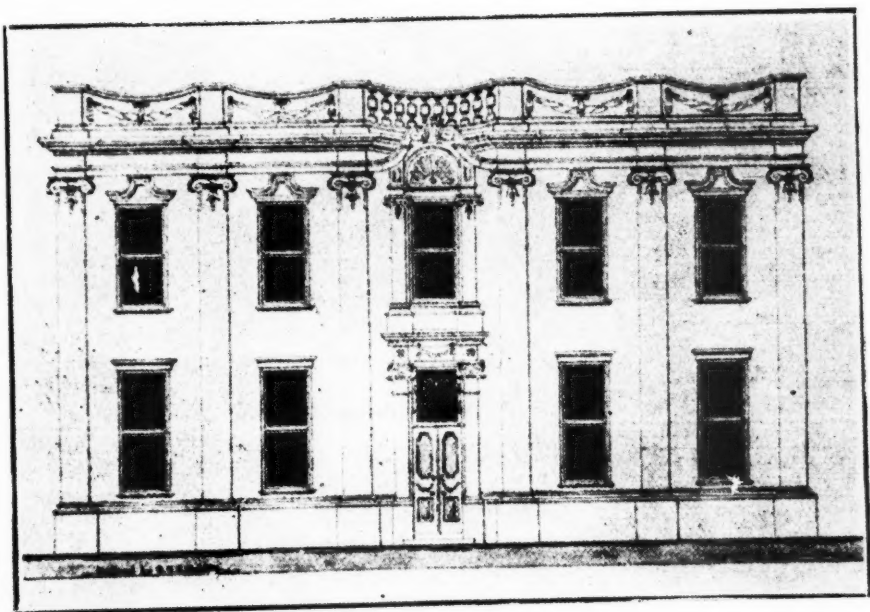
¹ FRANKEN: bl. 79.

² *Ibid.* bl. 1-88.

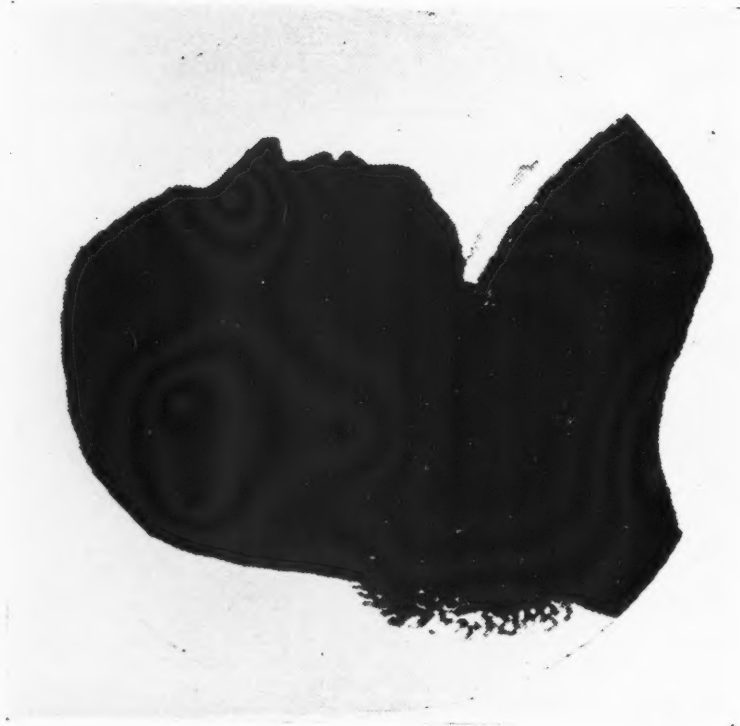
³ *Ibid.* bl. 24.

⁴ *Ibid.* bl. 68.

⁵ *Ibid.* bl. 41.



2. Koster se huis, Heerengracht, Kaapstad. Bêreplek van die Dessiniaanse Biblioteek



3. Ds. H.W. Ballot



3a. Elizabeth Wilhelmina Cruywagen, huisvrouw van
Ds. H.W. Ballot

Wilberforce Bird oor hom :¹ „Collecting of books was his favourite pursuit... it must have been by extraordinary diligence, that he was enabled to bring together so many valuable publications, and to form such a library in Cape-town. Detraction has published, that, at a time of great mortality, when sales of the property of the dead and of the distressed were held in every part of the town, Mr. Dessin constantly attended, and purchased at a low price the books on sale..." Hoe dit ook al sy, Von Dessin het 'n boekery van 3856 boekdele byeengebring, en daaruit „sou ons tot die besluit kom dat die Kaap van die 18e eeu nie sleg voorsien was van degelike en wetenskaplike lektuur in partikuliere besit nie.”²

Toe hy in 1761 oorlede is, het hy sy boekery aan die kerkraad van die Ned. Geref. Kerk, Kaapstad, bemaak „tot een grondslag van een publicque Biblioteecq, ten nutte van 't algemeen, met jaarlijxe vermeerderinge van deselve door boeken van alle faculteyten en geleersaamheyd, waar door een yder in zijne besondere wetenschap zal kunnen werden gedient”.³ Dus moes dit 'n *vry biblioteek* wees *waartoe die publiek toegang sou hê*. Hy het verder 'n som geld gelaat waarvan die rente sou aangewend word om boeke by te koop. Daar was 2597 werke in 3856 bande, waarby tot 1804 nog 178 werke in 537 dele bygevoeg is.⁴ Die Ned. Geref. Kerk het dadelik vir huisvesting gesorg en reëls vir die gebruik van die boekery opgestel. In 1764 is ds. J. F. Bode as bibliotekaris aangestel. *Cornelius de Jong* gee ons 'n beeld daarvan omstreeks 1791 : „Boven het huis van den koster der Gereformeerde Kerk heeft men een publieke Bibliotheek, waarvan het getal van boeken groot genoeg is... De oudste Predikant Serrurier is 'er opzichter van, en buiten dezen Heer en Vreemdelingen, geloof ik, dat deze boekerij schaars bezocht wordt”.⁵ Toe die Suid-Afrikaanse Biblioteek opgerig is, het die Kerk die Dess. Bibl. in 1820 onder hulle sorg geplaas, waar dit vandag nog gehuisves is.

Die totstandkoming van die Dess. Bibl. in 1761 is 'n mylpaal in die geskiedenis van biblioteek-ontwikkeling in Suid-Afrika. Dit is nie alleen die heel eerste openbare biblioteek in ons land nie, maar een van die *vroegste vry biblioteke in enige land*. Dit skyn byna seker dat Von Dessin met die geskifte

¹ BIRD, W.: *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822*. London, Murray, 1823, p. 152.

² FRANKEN : bl. 69.

³ SPOELSTRA, C.: *Bouwstoffen voor de geschiedenis der Ned. Geref. Kerken in Zuid Afrika*. Amsterdam, H. A. U. M., 1907. Deel II : bl. 298-301.

⁴ FRANKEN : bl. 68-9, 77.

⁵ DE JONG, Cornelius: *Reizen naar de Kaap de Goede Hoop...* Haarlem, Bohn, 1802. Deel I : bl. 115-6.

van *G. W. Leibniz* en *Gabriel Naudé*¹ bekend was, want sommige van die idees in sy testament stem byna woordeliks ooreen met hulle biblioteekkundige geskrifte. Weer is dit 'n bewys dat Von Dessin 'n geleerde man was, wat goed op hoogte was met die leidende denkers van sy tyd.

H. W. BALLOT, oorl. 1814

Die volgende bibliofiel wat genoem moet word, en wat baie ooreenkomste met Von Dessin toon, is ds. *Hendrik Willem (of Heinrich Wilhelm) Ballot*, van Duitse oorsprong, wat teen 1787 student in Leiden en toe jarelank Hollandse predikant in Malakka en Batavia was.² In 1797 op sy terugreis van die Ooste het hy aan die Kaap geland en die Engelse goewerneur versoek om toegelaat te word om hom hier te vestig. Daar was 'n groot tekort aan predikante destyds en dus is sy versoek toegestaan. Vir drie maande (tot einde 1797) het hy op Tulbagh as plaasvervanger vir ds. M. C. Vos opgetree, wat na die grensdistrikte gereis het.³ Daarna is hy as predikant van Graaff-Reinet benoem, waar hy werksaam was van Julie 1798 tot Okt. 1800. Gedurende daardie jare was Graaff-Reinet in 'n oproerige toestand en ds. Ballot het gewikkeld geraak in die moeilikhede met Adriaan van Jaarsveld en Coenrad de Buys. Blykbaar het die landdros meermale tot hom sy toevlug geneem om die gemoedere van die burgers tot bedaring te bring, dat ds. Ballot hulle „vermaanende tot liefde en eensgezindeheid”.⁴ Landdros Bresler het getuig: „The conduct of the Rev. Ballot and the propriety of his proceedings towards averting evils ought to be highly recommended”. Op Graaff-Reinet het hy hard gewerk om 'n kerkgebou op te rig, wat hy tog in Sept. 1800 kon inwy.⁵ Op eie versoek is hy toe verplaas.⁶ Vir vyf maande in Drakenstein werksaam (circa 1801), is hy daarna as predikant van Swellendam in 1802 aangestel, waar hy vir sowat 'n jaar gebly het en toe na Tulbagh oorgeplaas is, waar hy van 1803 tot sy dood in 1814 gevestig was. Daar het *H. Lichtenstein* op sy

¹ COETZEE, P. C.: Die nalatenskap van Von Dessin. In: *Historiese studies*, Univ. van Pretoria Jrg. III (1942): bl. 93-5.

² MOORREES, A.: Die Ned. Geref. Kerk in Suid-Afrika, 1652-1873. Kaapstad, S.A. Bybelvereniging, 1937. bl. 355-358, 435-437.

³ SPOELSTRA: deel. II, bl. 492.

⁴ *Ibid.*, bl. 519.

⁵ DREYER, A.: Eeuwfeest-Album van die Ned. Geref. Kerk in Zuid-Afrika, 1652-1804. Kaapstad, Z. A. Bijbelvereniging, 1924. bl. 54-56.

⁶ THEAL, G. M.: Records of the Cape Colony, 1796-1799. Capetown, 1897-1905. vol. II, p. 370.

reis in die geselskap van Kommissaris-General de Mist met hom kennis gemaak en teken aan op 20 Nov. 1803 „De Mist en de dames logeerden by Ds. Ballot”. Verder vermeld Lichtenstein oor Ds. Ballot: „De tegenwoordige predikant is een geboren Duitscher, met name Ballot, die zijne akademiejaren op Duitsche universiteiten gesleten . . . Zijne zachtaardige, zeer beminneenswaardige vrouw is van eene der aanzienlijke Kaapsche familien, en haar vriendelijk zoo wel als haars mans regtschapen en vrolijk karakter maken het verblijf in dit gastvrije huis tot het aangenaamste, dat de reiziger zich verbeelden kan . . . Jammer is het maar, dat er, sedert eenige jaren, door de verkeerde pogingen van dweepzieke zendelingen¹ eene soort van bigotterie in deze landstreken ingedrongen is, welke het goedhartig en vrolijk karakter dier menschen geheel misvormd en hen in bedilzieke, norsche pijlaarbijters herschapen heeft. Dans, gezang en spel zijn uit de gezelschappen gebannen, en nauwelijks kunnen zij hunnen predikant vergeven, dat hij verdraagzamer denkt en de jeugd nu en dan tot vrolijkheid aanmoedigt”.²

Sy seun ds. J. S. S. Ballot het later predikant van George (1827-1862) geword en was getroud met 'n dogter van ds. J. J. Kicherer, die sendeling van die Londense Sendinggenootschap. 'n Dogter van Ds. J. S. S. Ballot is getroud met Carl Frederik Ziervogel.

Ds. H. W. Ballot moes 'n aansienlike aantal boeke besit het, sommige waarvan hy saam met hom uit Duitsland na die Ooste en toe na die Kaap meegebring het, soos afgelei kan word uit sy naamtekening, met plek en datum daarby, in 'n aantal boeke. Aan hierdie versameling het sy seun heelwat bygevoeg en hierdie boeke saam met 'n klompie van ds. Kicherer, het in besit van sy nakomelinge gebly, totdat dit in 1945 deur die Biblioteek van die Universiteit van Kaapstad van hulle aangekoop is. Ongelukkig het rotte en klamigheid die boeke heelwat verniel en sommige dele van stelle het ook verlore geraak. Maar die *Ballot-Versameling*³ tel vandag sowat 780 dele, sommige met Ds. H. W. Ballot se naamtekening uit 1779 en 1782. Dus het ons hier 'n voorbeeld van 'n versameling wat vir byna 170 jaar, geslag na geslag, in besit van een familie aan die Kaap gebly het.

¹ nl. di. M. C. Vos, J. J. Kicherer, e.a.

² LICHTENSTEIN, H.: Reizen in . . . Afrika . . . 1803-7. Dordrecht, Blussé, 1813-4. Deel I: bl. 282-3.

³ Hierna aangedui: Bal. Ver.

ANDER BOEKVERSAMELINGS

'n Derde boekbesitter was *François Renier Duminy*,¹ die Franse skeeps-kaptein, wat tussen 1767 en 1777 gereeld die Kaap besoek en in 1777 met Johanna Nöthling aan die Kaap getroud is. Vanaf 1786 het hy hom aan wal gevestig en equipage-meester by die Kompanjie geword. In 1811 is hy hier oorlede. Dis interessant om ook te vind dat Johanna Duminy se ouers 'n legaat van Von Dessin geërf het vir hul sorg van hom op sy ou dag, nl. „my in myne jongst gehad hebbende swaare siekte trouw en onvermoeid ten dienste is geweest . . . een somma van Twee Duysend guldens Indische Valuatie, als meede mijne grafsteede", wat toe in Duminy se besit oorgegaan het „Erfbrief van mijn graft in de Kerk van Jochen Nicolaas von Dessin".² Onder Duminy se boekbesit kry ons, soos verwag kan word, Franse boeke: die werke van Voltaire (40 dele), Racine, Montesquieu, Beaumarchais, Buffon (17 dele), La Fontaine, Rousseau, Mme. de Sévigné, Gil Blas, 'n lewe van admiral Coligny, en 4 Franse Bybels.

Twee ander aansienlike boekversamelings kom voor in boedel-opgawes in die Kaapse argief. In 1792 vind ons dat *Nicolaas Godfried Heyns* 25 boeke, behalwe 'n vijool en 'n klompie musiek, nalaat.³ Hy was een van die vier lede van die vryburgers se deputasie na Holland in 1779-82 en moes 'n man van „'n taamlike aansienlike intellektuele ontwikkeling" gewees het. Daar is eksemplare van *Inleiding tot de Hollandsche Rechtstgeleerdheid*, en *Hollandsche Consultatiën* (in 7 dele) — 2 regsboeke; 4 mediese boeke, waaronder *Nieuwe Britsche Appoteecq*; 2 Frans en Italiaanse grammatikas, 'n Duitse woordeboek, en Meyer's *Woordenschat* (in 2 dele); en ook *Grondbeginsels der Meetkunst*. In 'n tweede boedelopgaaf omstreeks 1790 kom daar veel meer boeke voor: ongeveer 400 items. Daaronder is 'n baie groot verskeidenheid boeke: in verskillende tale (Latyn, Grieks, Frans, Duits, Engels, sowel as Hollands) en oor alle moontlike onderwerpe. Dit sluit in bekende boeke van daardie dae wat herhaaldelik voorkom en veel in gebruik was: b.v. Flavius Josephus (1722);⁴ Carpzovius;⁵ S. van Til; F. Burmannus: *Over 't Ouden Testament*

¹ Duminy-dagboeke, toegelig deur dr. J. L. M. Franken. Kaapstad, Van Riebeeckvereniging, 1938. bl. 22, 48.

² *Ibid.*, bl. 2, 54.

³ BEYERS, dr. C.: Die Kaapse patriotte, 1779-1791. Kaapstad, Juta, 1929. bl. 99-100.

⁴ Petrus B. Borchers vertel dat hierdie boek geliefkoosde lektuur in sy vader (ds. Meent Borchers) se pastorie op Stellenbosch omstreeks 1795 was.

⁵ Op 11 Mei 1754 teken Von Dessin aan: „den verduitschen *Carpzovius* voor vaderl. inkoop-prys gekogt van Van Schoor Rxs. 5.20". (Franken: bl. 69). Die boeke is nog in Dess. Bibl. Dit kom ook in Bal. Ver. voor.

(1675); J. Hubner: *Staats- en Couranten tolk* (1732); Vondels: *Poezij*; Hoogvleit: *Abraham den Aartsvader* (1729); Doddridge (1761); H. S. van Alphen; *Gulliver's travels*; Linnaeus (in 24 dele, 1761); Focquenbroek (1679); Gellert's *Werken* (in 10 dele); Coenrad Mel;¹ en die reeds genoemde Balthazar Becker (in 3 werke). Boeke van skrywers wat persoonlik aan die Kaap bekend was, soos Valentyn en Dapper; De Marre en Aernout van Overbeke; en ds. W. van Gendt, word ook aangetref. Daar is verder die bekende werke van d'Outrein, b.v. *Korte schets der Goddelijke waarheydt* (1700), wat ook onder Adam Tas se boeke voorkom en wat die Kerkraad van Drakenstein in 1717 vir Goeverneur Chavonnes vra om vir hulle deur Here Sewentien te laat bestel;² dis 'n boek wat ook deur die skoolmeesters na 1714 gebruik is vir onderwysdoeleindes (wat hoofsaaklik tog naar godsdiens-onderrig was),³ Baie Romeins-Hollandse regsboeke deur Hugo de Groot, Simon van Leeuwen, C. van Bynkershoek is ingesluit. 'n Stel wat ook in die Bal. Ver. voorkom is *Vaderlandsche Letteroeffeningen* en sy vervolgreeks (1761-1780), in 46 dele. Hierdie werk, net soos *De Boekzaal van Europa*, bevat boekaankondigings, en is amper 'n soort „Ons Eie Boek” van daardie dae. Weereens word dus bewys hoe verskeie Kaapse burgers op hoogte van sake probeer bly het van nuwe publikasies in Europa.

Maar tot dusver is nog baie min oor die inhoud self van die Dess. Bibl. en Bal. Ver. gesê nie. Met opset is die kleiner versamelinkies eers behandel, want al hierdie boekerye vertoon groot ooreenkomste met mekaar wat inhoud betref. Om 'n begrip te kry van watter soorte boeke aan die Kaap destyds in omloop was, moet ons meer in besonderhede gaan. Die feit dat dieselfde boeke of skrywers herhaaldelik in die besit van verskillende bibliofiele voorkom, bewys tog dat ons nie met 'n alleenlopende smaak of individuele belangstelling te doen het nie. Die feit dat beide Von Dessin en Ballot blykbaar soveel boeke van ander mense of boedels of op openbare veilings aangekoop het, versterk die mening dat ons wel hulle boekerye kan beskou as verteenwoordigend van die soort boeke wat destyds gelees is. Ons kan bowendien selfs sommige bepaalde titels of skrywers noem wat besonder baie voorkom en gevolglik veral populêr was.

¹ „De lust der heiligen in Jehova” en „De heraut der eeuwigheit” van C. Mel is gebedeboeke wat vir byna 150 jaar in Suid-Afrika baie gebruik is, ook nog deur die Voortrekkers.

² SPOELSTRA: deel II: bl. 434.

³ FRANKEN, dr. J. L. M.: Huisonderwys aan die Kaap (1692-1732). In: *Annale van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch*, Jrg. XII, B(I), 1934: bl. 8.

Die Dess. Bibl. verteenwoordig kortom die boeke wat aan die Kaap gelees is tussen 1710-1760, terwyl die Bal. Ver. vernaamlik die tydperk 1770-1820 weerspieël, met die grootste gedeelte van die versameling eerder verteenwoordigend vir die vroeër, as die later jare van die tydperk.

In die gedrukte katalogus van die boekuitstalling (Maart-April 1952) in Kaapstad tydens die Van Riebeeck-Fees, word baie meer van die enkele werke in hierdie versamelings behandel, as wat hier kan gedoen word. Beide die Bal. Ver. en Dess. Bibl. bevat boeke in baie tale oor alle moontlike gebiede van die kennis. Albei sluit in al die bekendste stigtelike werke van die voorafgaande 150 jaar. *Calvyn* se werke kom in albei voor, hoofsaaklik in Latyn, in uitgawes tussen 1578 en 1670. Dess. Bibl. bevat meer van die Hollandse klassieke werke uit die 17e eeu, soos Hooft, Bredero, Jacob Cats, en Vondel, terwyl Bal. Ver. baie woordeboeke en grammatikas het, b.v. Stockius: *Algemeen leerredenkundig woordenboek* (2 dele, 1738-43); Weiland: *Nederduitsch taalkundig woordenboek* (9 dele, 1790-1810); Egbert Buys: *Nieuw en volkomen woordenboek voor konsten en wetenschappen* (10 dele, 1769-1778). In albei word 'n baie groot hoeveelheid van die Latynse en Griekse klassieke gevind: b.v. die werke van Cicero, Homeros, Terentius en Ovidius. 'n Interessante stel in Bal. Ver. is Abraham Trommius: *Volkomene Nederlandsche Concordantie ofte woord-Register des Ouden en Nieuwen Testaments* (3 dele, 1672-91): dis die Bybelse woordeboek waaroor Erasmus Smit, die voortrekker-predikant, hom so verheug het toe sy swaer Stephanus Maritz, dit meebring uit die kolonie, 'n eksemplaar waarvan nog onder die Trekkers se boeke in die Voortrekker-Museum, Pietermaritzburg, bewaar word.¹ Om die waarheid te sê, daar is volop bewyse dat die Voortrekkers tot 'n sekere mate die soort boeke uit die tydperk wat die Bal. Ver. verteenwoordig, na die binneland meegeneem en nog lank gebruik het.

Die *Verklaringe over den Heidelbergischen Catechismus in 52 predicationen* deur Bernardus Smijtegelt (1665-1739) word in albei boekerye aangetref: Smytegelt se preekbundels is reeds vroeg in die 18e eeu hier in gebruik en hy het een van die bekendste skrywers onder ons voorouers geword; 'n boek wat gereeld by huisgodsdienst gelees is.² Moorrees meld dat baie van die skrywers uit die tydperk 1780-1880, dieselfde pietistiese en evangeliese rigting

¹ DE VILLIERS, dr. Anna: Voortrekker-lektuur. In: Voortrekker-gedenkboek van die Universiteit van Pretoria, onder redaksie van prof. I. D. Bosman, e.a. Pretoria, 1938. bl. 131.

² SCHONKEN, F. T.: De oorsprong der Kaapsch-Hollandsche volksoverleveringen. Amsterdam, Swets & Zeitlinger, 1914. bl. 30.

as ds. M. C. Vos verteenwoordig het — en juis al hierdie skrywers word veral in Bal. Ver. gevind, nl. R. Baxter, Ph. Doddridge, Smijtegelt, W. à Brakel, en Hellenbroek.¹ Dis nie vreemd dat dit die geval is nie, want ds. H. W. Ballot het persoonlik met ds. Vos kennismmaak in Tulbagh, asook met ds. Kicherer, wat verloof was aan Catharina A. van Lier, suster van dr. Helperus van Lier van Kaapstad, en wat later ds. Ballot se opvolger op Graaff-Reinet geword het. Ek vermoed dat baie van hierdie boeke deur die seun, ds. J. S. S. Ballot, wat met 'n dogter van ds. Kicherer getroud was, bygevoeg is. J. L. Ewald, Petrus Immens, Joannes Clarisse, J. H. van der Palm e.d.m. kom almal in die Bal. Ver. voor. Dus is stigtelike werke goed verteenwoordig, soos verwag kan word uit die gees van die tyd, en aangesien die Bal. Ver. hoofsaaklik deur twee predikante versamel is. 'n *Practicaal geneeskundig Hand-boek* deur D. L. Heister (1762), baie reisbeskrywings en geskiedenis-boeke b.v. *Historie der Arabieren en Russland aus philosophischem und litterarischem Gesichtspunkt betrachtet* (1794) toon weer gans ander belangstellings. In Dess. Bibl. vind ons, weliswaar, nog groter verskeidenheid en 'n groter aantal boeke. Lodensteyn, Haverman, Groenewegen en Bunyan, skrywers van stigtelike werke wat baie in omloop was, word ook daar aangetref. Maar aan die ander kant vind ons ook boeke soos: *Indisch koopmans en boekhouders cabinet* (1720); *Gronden der navigatie* (1737); *Elk zyn eigen Doctor* (1696); baie regsboeke b.v. *Corpus Juris Civilis Romani* (1720); en bekende reisbeskrywings soos Bogaert, Kolbe en Dapper; en geskiedenisboeke soos Le Clerq's *Geschiedenis der Vereenigde Nederlanden* (1730).

Die aanwesigheid van ongeveer 10 Duitse gesangboeke in die Dess. Bibl. herinner ons dat Von Dessin 'n Lutheraan was; waarskynlik het hierdie boeke vroeër aan Duitsers aan die Kaap behoort,² want o.a. verneem ons dat die families Johannes Bresler en T. F. Dreyer gereeld Duitse boeke van vriende in Tranquebar ontvang het in 1771-2 b.v. godsdienstige boeke oor die Lutherse leer, Duitse gesangboeke, werke van August H. Francke en stigtelike traktaatjies vir die gebruik van die Lutherane.³

¹ In „School reglement” vir 1778 verneem ons „de eerste classe het vraagboek van Hellenbroek”. (vgl. Kaapse Archiefstukken 1778, persklaar gemaak deur K. M. Jeffreys. Kaapstad, 1926. bl. 503). Die landdros van Stellenbosch skrywe aan Ryk Tulbagh in 1770 dat hy op reis in Swellendam-distrik onder die skoolboeke gevind het „een den titul voerende . . . door Hellenbroek”.

² HOGE, dr. J.: Die geskiedenis van die Lutherse kerk aan die Kaap. Argief-Jaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis. Jrg. I (2), 1938: bl. 83.

³ *Ibid.* bl. III.

Ons vind dus onder die 18e eeuse boekliefhebbers aan die Kaap, soos verwag kan word, Nederlanders, Franse en Duitsers. Die boeke wat in hulle versamelings voorkom is meestal wetenskaplik van aard, vir geleerdes bedoel. Dat boeke wel by ander mense ook voorkom, kan voldoende bewys word : b.v. in die boedel van Christiaan Daniel Persoon wat in 1776 dood is, word genoem : „een party boeken in zoort”.¹ Die belangstelling vir die gedrukte woord het baie aankomelinge dus saam met hulle hierheen gebring : die burgers het in mindere of meerdere mate boeke gekoop en besit, boeke versamel en gelees. Deur sulke bibliofiele, en deur die gewone burger wat slegs 'n paar boeke besit, maar die paar herhaaldelik gelees en soms van buite geken het, is belangstelling vir die boek aan die lewe gehou en voortgeplant.

Op die wyse kan hierdie 18e eeuse boekversamelings beskou word as die voorlopers van ons latere biblioteke. 'n Veel breedvoeriger studie as die huidige is nodig om die voorgeskiedenis van ons biblioteekwese te kenskets, maar hier het ons darem met 'n paar grepe die agtergrond daarvan probeer aandui.

¹ FRANKEN, dr. J. L. M. : Uit die lewe van 'n beroemde Afrikaner: Christiaan Hendrik Persoon. In : *Annale van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch*, Jrg. XV, reeks B(4), 1937 : bl. 51.

AN 1820 SETTLER CIRCULATING LIBRARY AT GLEN LYNDEN, EASTERN PROVINCE

by

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THE historian of South African libraries would perhaps not expect to find much promising material for study among pioneer communities such as the 1820 Settlers in the Eastern Province. If he were looking for evidence of planned and consistent library development in any of the main centres of population during the first few decades after the landing he would certainly be disappointed. He would find stray references to a short-lived circulating library in Graaff Reinet in 1822, and to another in Grahamstown in 1827, but it was not until 1842 that the earliest public library in the Eastern Province was started, the Grahamstown Public Library, the career of which has been so ably described by Mr. C. C. Wiles in *The tale of a library, 1827-1948*.

Curiously enough there was one Eastern Province library before this date, a small one but apparently quite flourishing, and it was located not in one of the towns but in a small settlement known as Glen Lynden in the Baviaans River Valley, about 16 miles from Bedford. This was the area to which the Scottish party of settlers came, led by Thomas Pringle, the well-known poet, author, journalist and one-time sub-librarian of the South African Public Library. The fortunes of this party are described by Pringle in his *Narrative of a residence in South Africa* (1834), and on the last page he refers to the settlers at Glen Lynden as having "a well-selected subscription library of about four hundred volumes". This passing remark which, as far as is known, is the only reference in any existing document to the Glen Lynden Library, would not in itself be of any special significance, but we happen to know a

good deal more about it from the very fortunate circumstance that a considerable part of the book-collection still exists, and is now housed in the Rhodes University Library. From internal evidence revealed by the books themselves and from the few facts which can be gleaned from tradition, we can piece together something of the history of this library and can form a fairly clear picture of what it was like.

In June 1946 Miss Una Long and I went to Glen Lynden on the invitation of the late Major E. J. T. Pringle and his brother Dr. R. N. Pringle to inspect a number of old books and documents at the farm "Lyndoch", which was the home of the Pringle family from the time of the settlement. The majority of the books shown to us contained a book-plate headed "Glen-Lynden Library, South Africa". We were told that this library was originally housed in the little church at Glen Lynden (one of the earliest of the Settler churches, built in 1829), and removed some considerable time afterwards to a room in the local shop, from which it was finally taken to Major Pringle's residence at "Lyndoch". There were no records of any kind, no registers of borrowers or accessions, and it was not known exactly when the library started or when it ceased to function. There were strong grounds for believing that Thomas Pringle himself assembled the nucleus of the book-collection after his return to Scotland in 1826, and that the library was placed under the care of the minister of the newly-built church, who was also schoolmaster to the settlement.

This is all we know about the Glen Lynden Library from external evidence, and part of the information is based on tradition only. The books themselves tell a rather fuller story. 297 volumes are now housed in the Rhodes University Library. Of these, 240 have accession numbers ranging from 1 to 698, so that if we include the volumes which have no accession numbers, the collection must have contained at least 750 books. The book-plate to be found in most of the volumes is itself of great interest. It is reproduced elsewhere in this issue, and an unused copy which was found in one of the books has been sent to the Africana Museum in the Johannesburg Public Library. Librarians will enjoy reading the "general regulations" and will note with special interest that the loan-period for books was allowed to vary with the size of the volume. This book-plate is certainly the work of a person with some experience of libraries and one is strongly tempted to ascribe it to Thomas Pringle himself, though this is merely a conjecture.

GLEN-LYNDEN LIBRARY,
South Africa.



No. 162

Presented by Thomas Parrish

November 1. 1828.

GENERAL REGULATIONS.

I. The Books shall be lent out to Subscribers only, and on the following conditions, viz:—Quartos must be returned within Six Weeks; Octavos in Four Weeks; and smaller Volumes in Three Weeks.

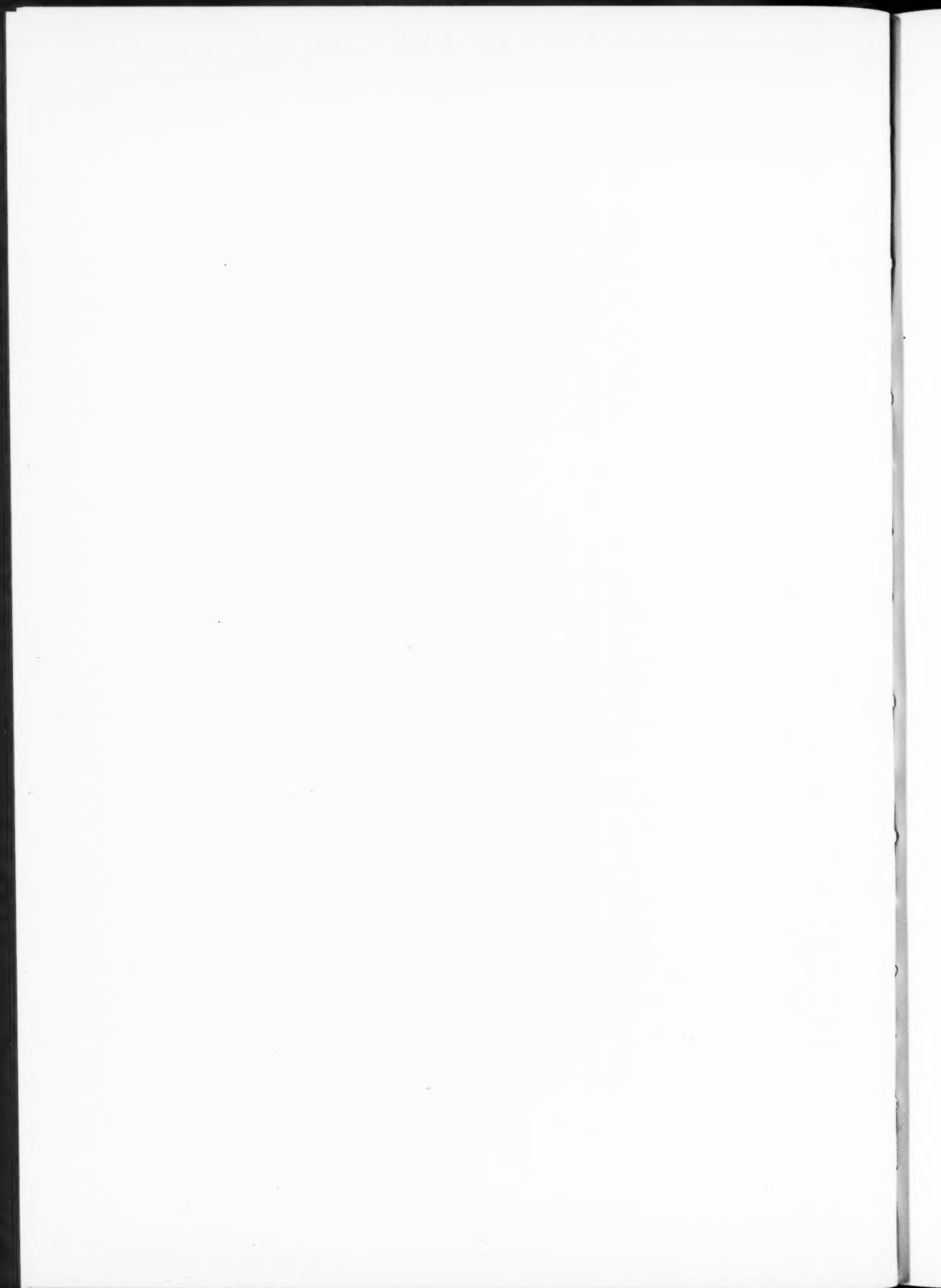
II. Persons residing at a distance may have these periods doubled, on paying a higher Subscription.

III. All the Volumes of any Work may be taken out at once; but liable to the same conditions as one Volume.

IV. Any person neglecting to return a Book on or before the Sunday following the expiration of the term for which it was borrowed, shall be subjected to a fine of One Penny for each Day till it shall be returned.

V. Any person losing or defacing a Book, or on lending it to a Non-Subscriber, shall forfeit its value to the Library.

VI. No Subscriber shall take out a Book unless his Fines and Subscriptions for the Current Year are paid up.



Many of the book-plates give the name of the donor and the date of presentation, for a large proportion of the books seem to have been gifts. A number of books were given by Thomas Pringle himself, and other volumes are inscribed "Presented by friends in Scotland". The names of most of the donors mean nothing to us, but there was one presentation by Dr. John Philip, which will be mentioned again later, and a copy of *A letter on the abolition of the slave trade . . .* by William Wilberforce, with an inscription on the title-page, "To Mr. Pringle, for the Library in Glen Lynden from the author". The order of the accession numbers does not correspond to the dates of presentation. The first volume accessioned was presented in 1830, but many volumes with later numbers were presented before this, the earliest date being November 1st 1828. It is quite clear that some time was spent in assembling the books before they were accessioned and put into circulation, and it may be inferred that the library actually began to function some time in 1830.

Practically nothing else is known with any certainty about the history of this library. The Cory Library at Rhodes University has on loan a collection of letters by members of the Pringle family, including several by Thomas Pringle himself, dating from 1826 till towards the end of the century. I have examined with particular interest one letter by Thomas Pringle, dated 16th February 1832, in which he outlines the duties required of the minister to be appointed at Glen Lynden. But although he warns that the incumbent will be expected to preach one sermon in English and another in Dutch every Sabbath (having fortified himself with the necessary knowledge of the Dutch language during the voyage from Scotland), and that he will also be school-master to the settlement, he makes no mention of any additional duties as librarian.

The most striking impression one has of this collection is the serious and didactic character of the books it contains. There are the inevitable collections of sermons. There are histories of England and Scotland, and books of geography such as *A new geographical, historical and commercial grammar: and present state of the several kingdoms of the world*, by William Guthrie (2 vols., 1799). There is a set of volumes in a series called "The library of entertaining knowledge", published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge. There are a number of books of travel in popular editions (some of them of great interest), and accounts of missions in various parts of the world. There

are some interesting and probably valuable books and pamphlets on slavery ; in this the hand of Thomas Pringle is to be detected once again, for he became secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society in 1827 and was closely associated with this organization until his death in 1834. There is a French grammar and there are a number of books of popular science. There are volumes of poetry, presented by Thomas Pringle, there are some of the Waverley novels and a few 18th century novels including *Peregrine Pickle* and *Gil Blas*, almost the only lapse into levity to be found anywhere in this collection. There is also an interesting set of 32mo volumes with the imprint "Evans and sons, Cheapside", and containing titles such as "Elizabeth ; or, the exiles of Siberia : A tale founded on truth" and "The entertaining medley. Being a collection of true histories and anecdotes calculated for the cottager's fire-side" as well as some narratives of travel and exploration and popular treatises of natural history.

There are also a few interesting Africana (perhaps there were others among the volumes which have been lost) : an imperfect copy of Dr. Philip's *Researches in South Africa* (vol. 1) with a pencilled inscription on the fly-leaf, "From the Author to the Library of the Scotch Church Bavians River S. Africa 1828"; a rather poor copy also of Thompson's *Travels and adventures in Southern Africa* (2nd edition) with a note on the fly-leaf, "This copy of Thompson's Travels is composed of the proof-sheets before final correction which will account for any little inaccuracy and blotting that may be found in it. T.P."

Thomas Pringle quite rightly described it as a "well-selected library". It is certain that he selected many of the books himself, and it is also certain that he must have judged very well the needs of the community for whom the library was intended. It was a library designed for people to whom education was something just as vital and as difficult of achievement as the crops for which they toiled, and to whom books were a precious link with the cultural heritage which they had left behind them on coming to this remote frontier settlement in the Eastern Province. Considered from this point of view, this curious and rather forbidding collection of books with its well-worn bindings is in a sense an historical document, an interesting reminder of one important aspect of the frontier life in this province during the years following the settlement, and in addition a notable landmark in the annals of librarianship in South Africa.

THE 19th CENTURY AND THE 'COMMON READER'

by

D. H. VARLEY

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THE G. M. Trevelyan of South Africa has yet to arise, and the social history of the country as a whole, as distinct from regional studies, has yet to be written. Until this is done the history of books and reading cannot be seen in its proper perspective. But in the meantime there is much to be gleaned from the scattered evidence that does exist about the books that were read, and even the reasons for reading them. From catalogues, newspapers, letters, and reminiscences in increasing number we can begin to discern the impact of print on people.

As Mr. Immelman has been able to show in an earlier article in this symposium, some at least of the 18th century Kapenaars, contrary to general belief, remained in comparatively close touch with the stream of European culture. Those who did so were doubtless philosophically inclined and scarcely representative; but there is sufficient evidence to show that reader-collectors like Von Dessin were consciously amassing something that resembled on a tiny scale the European 'traditions' they had left behind them. That this inheritance was still, in fact, well above the heads of the generality of folk at the Cape need hardly be contested: so sophisticated an observer as Lady Anne Barnard pokes fun at the 'public library . . . stacked with controversy, law and physic' which still occupied the upper room in the Sexton's House in 1797, and the Cape farmers who 30 years later nearly ruined its successor, had precious little respect for the things of the mind.

It is therefore not surprising that the next development in the provision of the means of 'Home Education', following the enlightened recommendations of Commissioner de Mist, and the general current of thought in Europe

at this time, came not from below but from above, although in a form and direction equally unexpected. Just why Governor Lord Charles Somerset chose to levy a gauging-tax upon the sale of every cask of wine passing through the Cape Town market for the purpose of founding a Public Library in South Africa, is still a subject for conjecture. But although he so constantly figures in the school text-books as an arch-reactionary, it may yet be shown that this often disagreeable aristocrat cherished a genuine curiosity for learning and science, which humanitarians like Christopher Bird and the merchant, Francis Collison, and perhaps even Dr. James Barry, were quick to encourage.

The South African Public Library that arose in 1818, and was opened to the public to the tune of occasional verse by Suasso de Lima in 1822, may not have been the first free library in the sub-Continent — technically, the 'publicque biblioteecq' of Von Dessin has a prior claim, although the evidence goes to show that practically no-one used it. But it must have been one of the first in any colonial territory to admit free of charge 'all burghers above the age of 16, officers of the army and navy, civil servants and other fixed residents'. There is no doubt that for the time and place the Library deserved some of the encomia showered upon it by visiting travellers, who obviously expected nothing of the kind in so outlandish a spot.

It must not be forgotten, however, that in its formative years this 'rather respectable' institution owed much of its strength to men like Thomas Pringle, George Greig, Alexander Jardine and John Fairbairn, who like their 18th century predecessors had kept in touch with the literary stream in Europe — in this case, with London and Edinburgh in place of Amsterdam and Paris. Moreover the Library was for a long period run by and for a group of men with a passionate respect for knowledge and education for its own sake. Among them were Scotsmen who inherited an urge for self-improvement, and others who were impelled by educational and social ideas stirred up by the political and industrial revolutions in Europe. Combined with this driving curiosity, which filled the columns of the *Literary Gazette*, flowed into the Literary and Scientific Societies of the day, and stimulated Andrew Smith and his associates to undertake the Expedition into Central Africa in the name of science, came an interest amounting to a passion for improving other people.

Thus we find men ahead of their times, like Sir John Herschel,¹ laying down

¹ HERSCHEL, *Sir J*: A course of reading in 1834 (*S.A.L.*, v. 7, pp. 138-54, Jan.-April 1940).

reading courses of surprising modernity in 1834, and at about this time a movement was launched to found a Popular Library in Cape Town. For as Herschel remarked in his speech at the first anniversary meeting of this venture in 1835,

'to give that noble invention (printing) its full effect as a civilising agent, its inestimable products must not be confined, like the luxuries of life and the gifts of fortune, to a few, but must be made to circulate among the many; not regarded as an adjunct of superior station and wealth, and limited in their use to persons of the higher classes — the cream of society — but diffused throughout the great subordinate mass — and brought into contact, if possible, with every individual of a state.'

For this reason it was necessary to make books *cheap*, 'because the great body of the people in this as in every other country, have little money to spare after the demands of mere animal life and social custom are satisfied.' The largest sum payable for the use of this Popular Library therefore, was 4s. 4d., payable in fifty-two instalments, 'and that no individual may have cause to regret the waste, real or imaginary, of a single penny — the subscriber must first select a book for himself, the perusal of which is in his opinion worth the money.'

We do not know what kind of books there were to choose from in this collection of a thousand volumes, from which, with the exception of 'works strictly professional', no class was excluded. During the first year there were 193 applicants, chiefly apprentices, artisans and younger members of the population, who could not be expected to afford the £3 fee payable by the 'cream of society' at the South African Library. It would be pleasant to record that this brave venture not only thrived but blossomed; but its financial roots were shaky and the Popular Library, launched with such high hopes, after more than thirty years of somewhat tenuous existence closed its doors and handed its cash balance back to the Library from which it originally sprang.

This gospel of 'much for the many' recurs again and again in the pronouncements of public men at the Cape. In 1848, the year of revolutions, we find Dr. James Adamson declaiming at the Annual Meeting of the Public Library that his 'sympathies were all with the movements which provided,

not an overabundance for the few, but much for the many. If you put one man among 1,000 books, he will no doubt gain a great deal from them; if you put 1,000 men among 10,000 books, you do more than multiply the advantage a thousand times.' These modern-sounding sentiments were later echoed by the Attorney-General, William Porter — a great supporter of libraries and believer in the discipline of good reading — who declared that 'for my part I wish we could circulate our books for nothing.'

But it is as well to put this Library and these sentiments into their perspective. In a well-known passage Virginia Woolf, following Dr. Johnson, rediscovers the 'common reader' who 'differs from the critic and the scholar. He is worse educated, and nature has not gifted him so generously. He reads for his own pleasure rather than to impart knowledge or correct the opinions of others.' Who were the 'common readers' at the Cape, say in the third quarter of the 19th century — a hundred years ago? They cannot have been numerous; they must have been, for the most part, readers by family tradition. They were mainly townspeople, and chiefly English-speaking, for at this time the reading of Dutch works among the Dutch-speaking South Africans was at a comparatively low ebb, and the urge to write for a home public had scarcely begun to be felt.

By paging through the *Supplementary Catalogues* of the South African Library at this period one can glean something of the prevailing tastes, and an odd mixture it turns out to be. During 1856-7, for example, we find Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh* cheek by jowl with the *Daisy Chain*, and Ruskin and Trollope with a topical book on *Our tents in the Crimea*. Over in Pietermaritzburg, where the Natal Society was founded in 1851, the tale is much the same and so are the books: the common reader is human after all. Later in the century the three-deckers begin to multiply, and in the basements of the South African Library to-day many of these Victorian novels are still kept — as a relic from the days of the bustle and the brougham.

One aspect should not be left unexplored: the reading of that characteristic vein in a stratified society, the skilled artisan. Early in the 50's there was founded at the Cape a Mechanics' Institute, with provision for lectures on the universe, chemistry and other mysteries, with a library attached. This followed a familiar pattern in England, where the Yorkshireman George Birkbeck had provided — as early as 1800, and as a direct outcome of the industrial revolution — means for enabling the *mechanics*, as distinct from

the folk on the land, to gain the general education and orientation they then entirely lacked. As they developed, these Institutes came to be used not by the regular artisan but by the skilled craftsmen, the solicitors' clerks, the shopkeepers and their apprentices — the 'aristocracy of labour' at that time. Writing of South Africa at the end of the century, Sir Percival Laurence noted that 'the circumstances of the country are such that the class of intelligent operatives and mechanics — among whom a large proportion of the students of solid literature may be found — is comparatively small.' It must have been far smaller at the mid-century, so that it can never have constituted a large element in the reading population. But when the mining discoveries of the seventies and following years bring a new influx of potential readers, we can trace this solid core of self-made, knowledge-conscious men balancing the book against the bottle, launching library enterprises at Kimberley, Johannesburg and even at lesser places such as the diamond-digging settlement at Sydney-upon-Vaal.

In a striking address to the Cape Branch of the S.A. Library Association early in World War II Dr. E. G. Malherbe spoke of the way in which this superimposed pattern of reading tastes failed to take root in the country as a whole. Speaking of the first attempts of the Workers' Educational Association to spread adult education among South Africans he noted that

*'here an attempt was made to superimpose upon the pioneer, homogeneous (as regards class) population, dominantly rural in its outlook, a type of activity which was patterned on the highly industrialized life of England . . . In South Africa the white population, at any rate, considers itself homogeneously aristocratic. This is probably why the W. E. A. never caught on in South Africa. Its whole spirit is foreign to the South African situation.'*¹

'Dominantly rural' as he was, and predominantly but by no means exclusively Dutch-speaking, the South African away from the towns kept his own counsel, preferred his reading matter to be 'van 'n stigtelike aard', and participated but little in the intellectual activities of the day (such as they were). We know that there was a comparatively large public for reading matter of a certain type: from its first number, the journal, *De Wekker* had a circulation of 5,000 monthly. But in the schools and homes the old books prevailed, and

¹ MALHERBE, E. G. : Why stop learning? (*S. A. L.*, v. 13, no. 3, pp. 53-59, Jan. 1946).

it was not until the turn of the century, and the rise of a new literature and language, that circumstances were ripe for the twentieth century South African reading revolution.

At the same time there were promising indications even in the 1850's, that the reading of the Dutch-speaking section was a matter of private, if not public concern. In 1853 the *Zuid-Afrikaansche Christelijke Boeken-Vereeniging* was established in Cape Town, with the aim of encouraging the publication and distribution of reading-matter of a suitable kind in their own language to the rural population. Its founders, Dr. John Murray and Prof. N. J. Hofmeyr, were soon rewarded, and the illustrated *Kinderbijbel* published by Dr. Murray in 1856 had sold three thousand copies within six months of its appearance, and was destined to be reprinted many times. Moreover, the support given to Dutch periodical publications such as *De Kerkbode*, *Het Volksblad* and *Elpis* shows that there was a substantial core of wide readers among the Dutch-speaking section of the population, although many others were long content with their great inheritance, the Holy Bible, and with their local newspaper.

Yet although the pattern may have been foreign, the influence of the old-type English public subscription library was almost invariably a force for good. Mrs. M. E. Rothmann, the well-known writer of Afrikaans essays and sketches of life in the old Cape, has recorded her own debt to one of these old-established country libraries — at Swellendam — in an article in our own Journal.¹ After describing the efforts of men such as F. W. Reitz, father of the President of the Free State, and the famous Dr. William Robertson, to keep alive a centre of quiet discussion (in the Literary Society) and study (in the Library that succeeded it), she recalls how in later days the historian J. A. Froude looked in at the village library. 'Hy het die boeke deurgekyk, en in die geselsie wat by aangeknoop het het hy gesê: 'You've got a good collection!' It is against this kind of background, with its largely forgotten struggles to maintain a link of culture with the outside world, that one must judge South African reading of the 19th century.

There are three other factors that each in its own way influenced the literary scene in the second half of the 19th century. The first was the steady improvement of educational facilities — first in the Cape, where the first school libraries laid the foundation of not a few reading careers, but also in the Free State and Natal, and in a lesser measure, in the Transvaal. The second

¹ ROTHMANN, M. E. 'n Ou biblioteek (*S.A.L.*, v. 15, no. 2, pp. 65-68, October 1947).

factor was the recognition and status given to libraries of the Cape by the so-called Molteno regulations, which for the first time since the demise of Lord Charles Somerset's *free* library ensured a measure of government support to all libraries of town and country within the colony. It was no accident that Sir John Molteno should have taken this forward step, for as a young man just arrived at the Cape he had begun his career in the old Library in Cape Town, and never forgot what he owed to its strangely beneficent influence.

A third factor that is often forgotten is the surprisingly large number of benefactions with which many South African libraries of this century were endowed.¹ It was not an age of millionaires; rather a period when it was often an accepted canon that the man who had done well by his activities in a new country, should plough back his profits for the benefit of his fellow-men. So much has been said and written about the 'foreigners' who came, took and thereupon departed, that one forgets the legacies of men like Sir George Grey, William Porter (who left a bequest of £100 to every public library in the Cape), the Savage family who endowed the library at Port Elizabeth, William Hiddingh, Saul Solomon and Charles Fairbridge, to mention only a few — not to mention undertakings such as De Beers, who put back on to the shelves of the Kimberley Library some at least of the wealth carved out of the Great Hole. In an individualistic age it was men such as these who set the pace and the example, and their gifts being (in the words of Sir George Grey) 'left to some new country', have, however unconsciously, proved to it 'a treasure of great value, to some extent helping to form the mind of each of its generations' as they came following on.

But the most potent element of change in the reading-tastes and habits of the South African people did not and could not take place until an indigenous language and literature had emerged out of turmoil. How this occurred, and how it has led to the growth of an entirely new reading public in the first half of the twentieth century, is the subject of the article that follows. But in bridging the gap between the centuries a note of warning should be sounded. Just as, in the Victorian age, it would be untrue to assert that all the English in South Africa were good readers and all the Dutch were not, so, in the present century, it would be wrong to imagine that the 'new reading public' is made up of one section of the South African people and one only. For the spread of freely available library services and the increase in the use and

¹ KENNEDY, R. F.: Benefactions (*S.A.L.*, v. 14, no. 3-4, pp. 65-71, Jan.-April 1947).

ownership of books have brought opportunities to the 'common reader' at large, in a measure that would have astonished and delighted the Adamsons, Porters and John Murrays of a hundred years ago.

Last of all, in the 19th century their condition and educational attainments were such that few Coloured, African or Indian inhabitants of South Africa were able to benefit to any appreciable extent from the book and library resources of the country. With the growth of opportunity and economic well-being it may well turn out that this section of our famous 'multi-racial' community will provide the 'new reading public' of the second half of the 20th century, and so write a new chapter in the long history of books, readers and libraries in South Africa.

DIE OPKOMS VAN DIE NUWE LESERSPUBLIEK

1910-1952

deur

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HOE dikwels het ons nie die bewering gehoor dat Suid-Afrikaners nie lees nie? Moontlik word dit reeds selfs as een van ons nasionale karaktertrekke beskou. Hierdie bewering staan egter nie op pote nie, want dit is 'n feit dat daar nog nooit in Suid-Afrika 'n deeglike ondersoek na leesgewoontes ingestel is nie. Skrywer hiervan staan egter taamlik skepties teenoor pogings om 'n geestelike aktiviteit soos die wisselwerking tussen leser en boek met natuurwetenskaplike maatstawwe te probeer meet. Die bevindings en gevolgtrekkings wat in hierdie stuk voorkom, berus slegs op die persoonlike waarneming en ondervinding van die skrywer. As baie van die gevolgtrekkings dus vanselfsprekend voorkom, kan u u minstens daaraan troos dat dit nie die uitslag is van 'n duur en ingewikkelde ondersoek nie.

Om egter terug te keer tot die bewering as sou Suid-Afrikaners en veral die Afrikaanssprekendes nie lees nie: Een van die vernaamste faktore vir die aanmoediging van leeslus is ongetwyfeld die beskikbaarheid in voldoende hoeveelhede van geskikte leesstof. Wat was die toestand in hierdie opsig byvoorbeeld in 1910? Ons vind dat toe sowat 120 sg. openbare biblioteke bestaan het in Kaapland, 17 in Transvaal, 14 in Natal en 11 in die Vrystaat. Daar was dus biblioteke op meeste van die belangrike dorpe, maar op 'n groot aantal klein dorpies was daar niks nie. Hoeveel van hierdie biblioteke het egter boeke vry uitgeleen? Slegs een en die eer kom toe aan Harrismith om die eerste moderne vry biblioteek in Suid-Afrika te wees.

Daar was ook nie veel ander geleentheid om boeke te bekom nie, want toe, net soos nou nog die geval is, moes daar maar op baie min plattelandse dorpe boekwinkels voorgekom het. Op baie plekke was dus glad geen boeke

te kry nie en waar daar wel boeke was, het die publiek geen vrye toegang daartoe gehad nie.

Nou moet ook onthou word dat in 1910 die grootste deel van die blanke bevolking Afrikaanssprekend was en dat baie van hul dus nie met gemak Engels kon lees nie. Die aantal Afrikaanse boeke wat voor 1910 die lig gesien het, het 'n skrale 92 beloop en heelwat daarvan moes in 1910 reeds uit druk gewees het. In 1910 self het vyf nuwe Afrikaanse boeke verskyn en in die daaropvolgende vyf jaar het die jaarlikse totaal nie veel vermeerder nie. Talle Afrikaanssprekendes het hul dus in hierdie onbenydenswaardige posisie bevind: Engels kon hul nie met gemak lees nie; Nederlands het begin om vir hulle 'n dooie taal te word en in hul moedertaal het daar gemiddeld vyf nuwe boeke per jaar verskyn.

Afgesien van die gebrek aan geskikte leesstof egter, was daar ander faktore wat leeslus nie juis in die hand gewerk het nie. Vir lees het 'n mens vrye tyd nodig, maar as jy van soggens dou-voor-dag agter die ploeg moes stap of met sekel en sens die oes moes insamel en saans doodmoeg by die huis aankom, was daar vir lees nie die lus en ook nie die tyd nie. Eers later het moderne plaasgereedskap op die toneel verskyn om die boer se las te verlig. As 'n mens dag na dag op die voorposte van die beskawing 'n harde bestaan aan die wilde natuur moes ontworstel, het jy beslis geen Tarzan nodig om jou te vermaak nie. Hierdie sonnige land met sy heerlike klimaat het ook nie sy bewoners, soos Europa, vir lang tye van die jaar binnenshuis gedryf nie. Daar was altyd baie te doen en mense is selde of ooit so op hulleself teruggewerp dat hulle hul toevlug tot boeke hoef te neem.

Die groot meerderheid van die Afrikaners is ook nie afkomstig van die hoër klasse in die stamlande wat hul die weelde van geestelike self-ontwikkeling en-verfyning kon veroorloof nie. Hulle voorouers was meestal werkers, matrose en soldate wat hier 'n beter toekoms kom soek het en hulle was dus nie gedrenk in die Wes-Europese kultuur van hul tyd nie en was sekerlik geen groot lesers nie.

Maar tye verander. Eintlik het dit reeds met die stigting van Unie begin. Ek bedoel die geweldige groei wat sedert Unie op elke gebied plaasgevind het. Veral in die twintigerjare vind groot ontwikkeling op nywerheidsgebied plaas: die goudmynbedryf brei geweldig uit; reuse-ondernemings soos Yskor en Escom word in die lewe geroep; die Suid-Afrikaanse Uitsaaikorporasie word gestig. Ten spyte van 'n tydelike terugslag gedurende die depressie

van 1930-33, het die industriële revolusie definitief in Suid-Afrika posgevat.

Nie minder skouspelagtig as die nywerheidsontwikkeling nie, is seer sekerlik die fenomenale opbloeï van die Afrikaanse letterkunde. Tot in 1916 het slegs sowat vyf nuwe Afrikaanse boeke jaarliks die lig gesien. In 1918 verskyn daar egter 22, 38 in 1932, 92 in 1942 en 129 in 1947. Dit was egter nie net 'n kwessie van getalle nie; werke van hoogstaande gehalte het reeds verskyn, veral op die gebied van poësie. Ongelukkig moet hier gekonstateer word dat die prosa in die jongste tyd nie tred gehou het met die poësie nie en selfs swak vergelyk met die prosa van 'n kwarteeu gelede.

Al hierdie dinge was grotendeels die gevolg van 'n ontwakende nasionale bewussyn. Hiermee word o.a. bedoel die wil om self iets tot stand te bring ten spyte van die feit dat dieselfde diens of artikel goedkoper en beter in die buiteland gelewer word. Namate daar op industriële en kulturele gebied gepresteer is, het hierdie sukses weer op sy beurt die nasionale trots aangewakker.

Die nywerheidsontwikkeling het tot gevolg gehad die verstedeliking van die Afrikaanssprekende wat tot dusver hoofsaaklik op die platteland gevestig was. Langdurige droogtes en die depressie aan die een kant en die groeiende nywerhede aan die ander, het veral die minder gegoedes teen wil en dank na die stede gedryf. Dit was 'n swaar tyd van heraanpassing aan 'n omgewing wat vir hulle vreemd en ongenadig was. Sommige het ten gronde gegaan. Gelukkig is daar nou 'n nuwe opkomende Afrikanergeslag in die stede wat nie alleen beter aangepas is aan, en toegerus is vir die stedelike lewe nie, maar wat ook daarin geslaag het om 'n deel altans van die boere-atmosfeer en -tradisie in die stadslewe te bring. Afrikaners voel hul nou meer tuis in die stede. Daar is nou baie meer vrye tyd tot hul beskikking as vroeër en hulle maak druk gebruik van openbare biblioteke waar dit vry is, soos duidelik blyk uit uitleensyfers van die Johannesburgse openbare biblioteek en ander biblioteke op die Witwatersrand.

So 'n snelle ontwikkeling op ekonomiese gebied moet, vroeër of later, sy uitwerking op kulturele gebied laat geld. So het dit dan ook gebeur dat in 1928 die here Pitt en Ferguson deur die milddadigheid van die Carnegie-Korporasie van New York Suid-Afrika besoek om ondersoek in te stel na plaaslike biblioteektoestande. Dit het aanleiding gegee tot die Bloemfonteinse Biblioteekkonferensie van 1928, die stigting van die S. A. Biblioteekvereniging in 1930 en les bes tot die Interdepartementale Komitee se ondersoek

oor biblioteke in die Unie in 1937. Hierdie komitee het sulke belangrike en verreikende aanbevelings gemaak dat biblioteekontwikkeling in ons land vandag nog min of meer voortgesit word volgens sy aanbevelings.

In sterk en reguit taal het hierdie komitee gepraat : die ontwikkeling van biblioteke in die Unie van Suid-Afrika is ver agter dié van die res van die beskaafde wêreld ; die regering moet 'n besliste leiding gee in hierdie saak ; daar behoort 'n stelsel van vry biblioteke te wees waarvan die voordele vir elke burger beskikbaar sal wees.

Met forse trekke is 'n omvattende plan vir die verbetering van biblioteke geskets. Vir die platteland is 'n vry streekbiblioteekstelsel vir elke Provinsie voorgestel met 'n behoorlik-gekwalfiseerde biblioteekorganiseerder aan die hoof ; georganiseerde skoolbiblioteekdienste moet in elke Provinsie ingestel word ; regeringsbiblioteke moet behoorlik georganiseer en gekoördineer word ; 'n verbetering moet aangebring word in die status en diensvoorwaardes van bibliotekarisse, ens.

Dis ongetwyfeld grootliks aan die verstoë en memoranda van lede van die jong S.A. Biblioteekvereniging te danke dat hierdie komitee sulke waardevolle en gevorderde aanbevelings kon doen. As 'n mens soms teleurgesteld voel oor die stadige vordering wat daar tot 1944 gemaak is met die vrye biblioteekbeweging, is 'n mens geneig om te vergeet watter groot en ondankbare taak die voorstanders van dié beweging moes verrig. Dis nie moeilik om te besef watter muur van onverskilligheid en onkunde deurgegrawe moes word om die openbare bewussyn wakker te skud nie. Dis 'n onverskilligheid wat 'n mens vandag nog alte dikwels aantref. As daar van verbetering van biblioteke gepraat word, is niemand eintlik daarteen nie : dis tog iets goeds en onskuldigs. Selde sal iemand egter met onvermoeide ywer in die raadsale van die land pleit en oor die voortdurende welvaart van biblioteke waak. Biblioteke word wel as wenslik beskou, maar nie noodwendig as onontbeerlik nie. Dis hierdie houding wat verantwoordelik is vir die feit dat die uitstekende voorstelle van die Interdepartementele Komitee tot vandag toe nog nie almal tot uitvoering gebring is nie. Veel is egter reeds bereik.

Waar daar in 1910 slegs een vry biblioteek was, was daar 14 in 1937, en 20 in 1944. Vandag is feitlik alle openbare biblioteke vry in die Transvaal en Vrystaat waar die Provinsiale biblioteekdienste reeds in volle werking is. In die Kaapprovinsie is ook reeds 'n aanvang gemaak met 'n vry biblioteekdiens en in die twee streekgebiede wat tans bedien word, is daar reeds 22

vry biblioteke. Groot werk moet nog verrig word, want daar is nog ongeveer 'n 180 subskripsie-biblioteke in hierdie Provinsie. Ook Natal het 'n biblioteekorganiseerder aangestel en groot ontwikkelings kan binnekort verwag word. Die Munisipaliteit van Kaapstad het reeds 'n skema vir vrye biblioteekdienste binne sy grense goedgekeur en onlangs 'n biblioteekontwikkelingsbeampte aangestel. In die stede Kimberley, Oos-Londen, Port Elizabeth en Pietermaritzburg is daar nog geen vrye biblioteekfasiliteite nie, maar ook hierdie plekke sal mettertyd wakker skrik.

Dit is dus duidelik dat vrye biblioteke gedurende die afgelope paar jaar met rasse skrede ontwikkel het en dit kan met veiligheid aangeneem word dat daar vandag aansienlik meer as 100 vry openbare biblioteke in die Unie van Suid-Afrika is. Hierdie groot toename in vry openbare biblioteke het slegs plaasgevind omdat die vier Provinsiale Administrasies en die groot munisipale owerhede hulle verantwoordelikheid ten opsigte van biblioteke uiteindelik besef en ten volle aanvaar het.

Hoe het die publiek op hierdie gebeurtenisse gereageer? Kan daar nog gesê word dat Afrikaners nie lees nie, noudat vrye leesgeriewe meer en meer tot hulle beskikking geplaas word soos in ander beskaafde lande? Dit is wat gebeur het: Vanaf 1945 tot 1947 het die aantal lesers in die Transvaalse vry provinsiale biblioteekdiens van 10,696 tot 35,155 toegeneem en die aantal boeke gelees van 246,070 tot 785,770. In die een streekbiblioteekgebied wat in 1950 in die Vrystaat in werking was, het die aantal lesers binne ses maande van 3,665 gestyg na 6,904, terwyl 69,225 boeke binne dieselfde tydperk gelees is. Gedurende die eerste jaar van die vry biblioteekdiens in Kaapland het die aantal lesers in die eerste streek van 1,435 toegeneem tot 6,468 en die maandelikse sirkulasie van boeke van 3,672 tot 17,178. Hierdie syfers vergelyk besonder gunstig met soortgelyke syfers in die buiteland en dit is iets waarop ons in Suid-Afrika trots kan wees, want ons het te kampe met baie probleme soos lang afstande, swak paaie en 'n ingewikkelde heterogene bevolking.

Laat ons nou kyk wat die leesgewoontes van hierdie lesers is. Die eerste ding wat 'n mens tref, is die geweldige aanvraag na Afrikaanse leesstof op die platteland. Ongeveer 70% van die boeke wat gelees word, is in Afrikaans. Selfs die aansienlike aantal Afrikaanse boeke wat nou jaarliks verskyn, is nie voldoende nie. So groot is die aanvraag dat die arme bibliotekaris teen sy

beterwete selfs die swakste boeke wat in Afrikaans verskyn, in groot hoeveelhede moet aankoop.

Wat onderwerpsboeke betref, is die leser wat Afrikaans verkies, in 'n baie slegte posisie. Oor talle onderwerpe bestaan daar eenvoudig geen boeke in Afrikaans nie. Meeste onderwerpsboeke soos die bekende „Kennis vir Almal“-reeks is vir kinders geskryf. Hierdie tipe boek, geskryf uit die staanpunt van 'n volwassene, is dringend nodig. Die lewe van die Afrikaner is nie meer so maklik en eenvoudig soos 'n kwarteeu gelede nie toe elkeen, 'n mens kan maar sê, met genoeg kennis gebore is om 'n bestaan te kan maak. Selfs boerdery is nie meer 'n allemanswerk nie, maar vereis 'n groot verskeidenheid tegniese kennis om 'n sukses daarvan te maak. Die plattelanders wat na die stede verhuis het, het gou uitgevind dat 'n mens jou vir een of ander definitiewe ambag moet bekwaam om kop bo water te hou. Groot getalle van hierdie mense smag na vakboeke in hulle moedertaal, maar dit ontbreek. Die leemte word nou noodgedwonge deur Engelse boeke gevul, maar in baie gevalle vind 'n mens dat hierdie boeke slegs betrekking het op oorseese toestande en dan verg dit buitengewone intelligensie van die leser om die algemene beginsels op Suid-Afrikaanse toestande toe te pas.

Soos reeds gesê, is daar 'n groot aanvraag na ligte Afrikaanse ontspanningslesstof, veral by die jong Afrikaners in die stede. Hier doen 'n belangrike en interessante verskynsel hom egter voor. Die oorgrote meerderheid van die Afrikaanse verhaallektuur is van so 'n swak gehalte dat die meer ontwikkelde leser veral in die groter dorpe en stede dit eenvoudig nie meer lees nie. Dit laat hulle trouens so 'n wantroue in die Afrikaanse literatuur kry dat hulle die paar goeie boeke wat jaarliks in Afrikaans verskyn, ook nie raak sien nie. Hierdie mense, alhoewel hulle nasie-bewuste Afrikaners is, lees dus uitsluitlik Engels en dit wil my voorkom asof hulle getalle vinnig aan die toeneem is. In hierdie verband rus daar 'n groot verantwoordelikheid op die Afrikaanse uitgewers. Hulle sal dit as hulle morele plig moet beskou om die goeie Afrikaanse skrywers te vind en aan te moedig sodat die vertroue van hierdie baie belangrike deel van hul leserspubliek teruggewin kan word.

'n Ander eienaardige verskynsel wat met die instelling van vry biblioteekdienste op die platteland voorkom, is die aanvraag na Engelse skrywers wat 'n geslag gelede populêr was; 'n skrywers soos mev. Humphrey Ward, mev. Henry Wood, Marie Corelli, Baroness Orczy, William le Queux ens. Dit wil voorkom asof hierdie lesers hul lees 'n dertig jaar gelede onderbreek het

en nou terugverlang na die gunsteling van hul jeug. Dit is ook opmerklik dat baie bekende skrywers hulle gewildheid oor die afgelope 30/40 jaar behou het en nog steeds herdrukke beleef : In hierdie groep val o.a. Florence Barclay, Ethel M. Dell, Anthony Hope, P. G. Wodehouse, E. P. Oppenheim, Conan Doyle, Zane Grey, Dornford Yates, Rafael Sabatini en Rider Haggard. Terselfdertyd is skrywers soos A. W. Marchmont, H. Bindloss, W. J. Locke, S. R. Crockett, A. & E. Castle, E. F. Benson, Robert W. Chambers, Max Pemberton, W. Churchill en F. F. Moore wat destyds baie populêr was, vandag vergeet.

Onder die jonger skrywers van ligte leesstof, is dit veral mense soos die volgende wat die grootste aanvraag geniet : Peter Cheyney, John Creasey, Leslie Charteris, J. D. Carr, Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers, J. H. Chase, Elizabeth Seifert, Berkeley Gray ens. Onder die skrywers van die beter tipe fiksie is Nigel Balchin, Lloyd Douglas, Graham Greene, F. L. Green, Pearl Buck, Sinclair Lewis, Charles Morgan, Somerset Maugham, Ernest Hemingway, Nevil Shute, John Steinbeck, Paul Gallico, Norman Collins en J. B. Priestley miskien die gewildste.

Dit wil my voorkom asof meeste lesers hulle net toelê op die algemeen bekende skrywers en dat dit lank neem vir 'n nuwe skrywer om ingang te vind tensy hy met so 'n sensasionele eersteling soos „Forever Amber” voor 'n dag kom. Dit lyk my egter of die populariteit van die sg. „best seller” van korte duur is, soos blyk uit die feit dat bogenoemde boek vandag byna dood en vergeet is. Dis jammer dat dit so moeilik gaan om nuwe skrywers by die algemene publiek gewild te maak, want daar verskyn uitstekende vertalings van goeie Franse en Italiaanse skrywers wie se benadering van sake verskil van dié van die Engelse en baie fris en stimulerend is. Ek dink hier aan mense soos Sartre, Supervielle, Ramuz, Camus, Malraux, Bernanos, Mauriac, Moravia, Levi, Pratolini, Berto en Marotta.

Van vertalings gepraat : ek wonder of dit vandag nodig is om ligte Engelse fiksie in Afrikaans te vertaal. Mense wat Tarzan of die Saint wil lees, kan dit in Engels lees en verkies dit ook so. Daar bestaan so baie boeke in ander Europese tale wat in Afrikaans vertaal behoort te word. Ek dink hier veral aan die ryk bronne van die Skandinawiese letterkunde wat m.i. nogal in Suid-Afrika byval behoort te vind.

Wat die volwasse lesers betref, is dit die vroue wat die meeste lees. Hulle lees veral die romantiese liefdesverhale, maar ook heelwat fiksie van goeie

gehalte en in die jongste tyd is daar onder hulle 'n goeie aanvraag na boeke oor blommeranskikking, binnenshuisversiering, kindersielkunde, kookkuns, versorging van die persoon en af en toe musiek. Na soveel jare van subskripsiebiblioteke, was dit vir die mense op die platteland 'n eersterangse ontdekking om te weet dat sulke boeke wel in openbare biblioteke gevind kan word. Baie van hulle verwag dan ook nie sulke boeke in 'n biblioteek nie en vra of soek dus nie daarna nie. Die mans lees die speur- en avontuurverhale en stel ook belang in boeke oor houtwerk, posduiwe, sport, populêre wetenskap en geskiedenis, terwyl boeke oor reisbeskrywings veral van Suid-Afrika, en lewensbeskrywings van bekende persone by albei geslagte gewild is. By verskeie bejaarde mense het ek 'n behoefte na eenvoudige stigtelike en godsdienstige boeke aangetref. Die kinders lees egter meer as die volwassenes en byna uitsluitlik Afrikaans. Dis werklik 'n probleem om die kinders op die platteland aan te moedig om meer Engels te lees. 'n Mens voel dat hulle so baie mis as hulle nie kennis maak met die pragtige kinderklassieke van die wêreld-letterkunde nie.

Ons lewe in 'n tyd van massa-kommunikasie-middels. In byna elke huis is daar 'n radio en in selfs die kleinste dorpe gereelde bioskoopvertonings. Hierdie dinge, mededingers van die boek, werk 'n passiewe houding in die hand: 'n mens hoef nie te dink nie; jy sit net rustig en kyk of luister. Lees is egter op sy beste 'n skeppende geestesaktiviteit wat soms heelwat inspanning van die leser verg en hom diep en blywend beïnvloed. Dit spyt my dus om ten slotte te moet sê dat dit my voorkom asof hierdie vrugbare soort lees effens gelyk het ten gevolge van die mededinging van rolprent en radio en dat die hedendaagse leesgewoontes nie meer op dieselde peil staan as 'n kwarteeu gelede nie. Baie mense deins terug vir die inspanning om 'n waardevolle boek te lees en verkies die platvloerse vermaak wat die goedkoop riller bied.

Suid-Afrika is egter nog 'n jong land met geen ou en vasgewortelde tradisies op kulturgebeid nie. Laat ons dus hoop dat met die vestiging van die leesgewoonte as 'n volkstradisie die gehalte van ons leessmaak steeds sal verbeter.

AN IMPRESSION OF BOOK PRODUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

JULIAN ROLLNICK

BOOKS are like buildings.

They can be jerry-built, strung together by printers with no concern for their craft, no respect for their men, no interest in the nature of the materials used. They are printed for publishers who are concerned only with the cost of production. They exhibit not only the obvious scars and short cuts effected in production, but also the slovenly character of printers who have grown so accustomed to their shoddy craft that they no longer really care.

Other books may be likened to a solidly-constructed cottage, where a good builder has done an honest job of work, almost proud of its lack of design, of the absence of artistry. Books of this kind are competently printed and bound by artisans who are well-trained and who give of their best; the paper and cloth is usually good, the type legible, the binding strong. But that is all. There is no attempt at co-ordinating and planning the different operations, no evidence of an aesthetic approach, no manifestation of taste, whether good or bad. These are the competent hacks of the book world. In the words of a Cape Town printer indignantly protesting against requests that a title page be slightly adjusted to reach a particular effect: "We are good commercial printers — no fancy stuff, please." Let us call this class of books the good commercials.

Finally, there are the books that clearly bear the mark of a designer, as a building unmistakably shows the influence of the architect. The materials have been carefully selected, the various sizes and proportions considered and specified, the craftsmanship sound; there is evidence of decoration and ornament, of carefully styled illustration, of a title page thoughtfully composed, perhaps an interesting design on the case; the positioning of the print area

on the page is precise and the press work studied and uniform. The book is obviously planned. It conveys an immediate impression of precision and control, of purposeful effects.

It is possible to find examples of each of these three classes of books produced in South Africa : the jerry-built ; the good commercial ; the controlled design. But while there is no difficulty in finding specimens of the first-mentioned class, one must search hard and long for examples of the third.

It would be convenient, and certainly tidy, if it were possible to relate each of these classes of books to an historical period, and so to demonstrate a progressive development from the time when the early printers at the Cape struggled with hand-set types to the present day, when our printing resources are equal to any in the world. But this is not possible : with isolated exceptions, most periods during the last century show examples of all kinds of work. Trends of any kind are most difficult to establish.

Half way through the last century a number of printers were actively engaged in book production at the Cape. In St. Georges Street were Saul Solomon & Co, W. F. Mathew, and Pike & Riches ; van de Sandt, de Villiers & Co. were in Castle St., and J. H. Hofmeijr in Hout St.; and there were others. They printed devotional and political books and pamphlets, as well as a good deal of commercial work and stationery.

The type catalogue of Saul Solomon & Co., gives a surprisingly comprehensive range of type specimens offered at the time. The characteristic "Modern" text type was available in sizes from an equivalent six point (Nonpareil) to eighteen point (Great Primer), each font containing upper and lower case Roman as well as a really fine Italic. The display types were even more varied, including fonts that bring a light to the eye of contemporary typographers who would exploit them for many period and exotic designs.

It must be remembered that these types, display and text, were set by hand, which perhaps explains the generally fine standard of typesetting, with tight, evenly-spaced words, and consequent good "colour" of the printed page. Positioning of the type area was in general consistent and deliberate, even though margin proportions are indifferent. The paper used was usually light in weight, but opaque and altogether suitable for book work.

Title pages of the early Cape printers are, in keeping with the style of the period, overburdened with titles, subtitles, descriptive notes, and other data, and exhibit the current taste for much intermixture of types. For decoration,

considerable use was made of cast-ornaments and wooden engravings, decorative rules and endpieces.

In general, most of the books of the period were uninspiring but solid ; they did a reasonable job of work, without distinction ; they were fair examples of our second class of book production.

In the *Progress of Prince Alfred through South Africa* (1860) Solomon pulled out all the tricks of his trade in honour of a special occasion. Every page in an unusually large format was set in well-led type surrounded by a type border, sometimes in colour ; some illustrations were lithographed in a second colour, some separately produced and mounted within a border ; the case is heavily ornamented in gold foil and the binding impressively solid : altogether a good example of the colonial printer "going to town".

The early printers must have had their problems : they will have had to bring their type out from Europe, and replacements must have been far from easy ; similarly with paper, ink, and other materials. To secure skilled labour must have been even more difficult. In view of the pioneering character of their efforts, the results are surely admirable : but they did not create a tradition of typography and book production that can be regarded as a sound basis on which to build to-day. There seems to have been no golden period in South African book production.

If the achievements of the early printers are praiseworthy in relation to their problems and difficulties, the same excuse cannot apply to the efforts of latter-day printers. As from the arrival of the type-setting machines at the turn of the century, standards of quality appear to have dropped, reaching an all time low to-day with the recent productions on newsprint of paperbacked thrillers. Nor has the occasional appearance of a really fine book served to do more than emphasize the poor level of the majority.

Certain characteristics of the printing of books are worth noting at this stage : a printer who uses good type, presses and paper, all or most of which are imported from Europe or U.S.A., should be able to produce as good a book as his brother craftsman overseas ; and further, no matter how mechanised book production has become, the scope for individual craftsmanship is great, at every stage, and in every one of the many operations involved. The implication is that any South African printer has equivalent opportunities of doing fine work as has his colleague in Holland or in Great Britain : these opportunities have, on the whole, not been exploited.

Consider, e.g. the production of a Shakespeare play, printed and published in this country in 1949. The paper used is an off-white Super-calendered stock, lacking enough opacity to prevent show-through, with impurities and spots as light relief — not the best starting point for any book. The type is large and legible, but badly set, with wide, uneven word spacing and no attempt at the careful typographic planning of this admittedly difficult genre of books; the title page is quite undistinguished, with no relationship to the typography of the text. The press work is appalling — varying all the way from a medium grey tone to an over-heavy black that destroys the character of the type. The position of the print area on the page varies throughout the book, with results on the margins that can hardly be imagined. The stiffness of the book's body is enhanced by endpapers of Manilla (!) and a rather heavy case printed to look like a title page, covered with poor cloth; the whole product is finished with an indifferent jacket.

With some variations, this may serve as a blueprint for most South African books since 1939. The paper may be coarse Antique Wove, used usually with the grain running the wrong way — thus increasing the stiff, brick-like feel of the book. Margins are always variable and haphazard; type often legible but press work execrable; binding rudimentary and tasteless. These are the legion of the jerry-built, for whom nobody cares: neither publisher nor printer, neither bookseller nor reader.

Over the last decade, the number of "good commercial" books have increased, and will no doubt soon establish a new standard, for trade and public alike. Printers like the Cape Times Ltd., Hortors Ltd., Rustica Press Ltd., Galvin & Sales Ltd., Nasionale Pers Bpk., Peninsula Press Ltd., Van Schaik & Co., have proved themselves capable of competent craftsmanship in book production. They can be trusted to do the right things, with legible setting, good positioning and line register, and efficient binding. The same may be said of the mission presses, Morija Printing Works in Basutoland and the Lovedale Press in the Cape, both working under relatively great difficulties, and both demonstrating with distinction the potentialities of African artisans.

Consider, for example, Professor J. L. B. Smith's *Sea Fishes of Southern Africa* — a monumental production of 400 pages in Demy 4to format (published by Central News Agency Ltd. in 1949).

Illustrations by many different artists are printed in line and in full-colour

tone on art paper, and well printed at that. The Times New Roman setting is adequate and precise, though at times not too legible. A fine endpaper design has been beautifully executed in lithography, and the case gold-blocked on to good cloth. The binding and general feel is first-rate, and the book opens flat, yet retains an almost flexible "feel". A good jacket design finishes a book that is in many ways a landmark of South African book production and demonstrates that the Cape Times Ltd. is equal to anything, can hold up its head with any printer in the world.

Many other technical, legal and educational books of the last decade have reached a similar level of competence. And yet so many, if not most, fail to satisfy for some reason or other: the typography is undistinguished; the paper is poor and coarse; the binding ugly; or, most frequent fault of all, the press work is bad.

There have been some well-designed books produced in South Africa, where the influence of the "architect" is apparent — whomsoever he was. In the twenties and thirties Van Schaik's and the Nasionale Pers both achieved some interesting productions. In 1932 Van Schaik printed and published the Hobson brothers' *Op die Voorposte*; set in a legible arrangement of 12 point Goudy, this book has well-proportioned margins and restrained ornaments at chapter heads, decorative initials and running headlines; an interesting title page and case design, and, especially noteworthy, fine press work. In 1936 Nasionale Pers issued Miemie Louw-Theron's *Op eie wieke* in an unusual, almost square format, on white, opaque paper with good margins and press work — altogether a most successful book.

The differentiating criterion between the good commercial and the controlled design is the work and influence of the designer. The designer need not be an artist; nor need he be a professional, solely engaged on book production. South Africa has probably not developed sufficiently to justify the emergence of a new professional group.

The designer may be any person directly or indirectly concerned with the production; he may be the production manager of the publishing house involved; or the works manager of the printing establishment; he may conceivably be the author, or the chief estimator; he may be an independent graphic artist, specially commissioned to do the work. It does not really matter who he is: but whoever it is, he, and he alone, must be finally responsible.

A committee cannot design and supervise the production of a book.

The designer concerned need not have an aesthetic training, nor a vast experience ; he should have a sound knowledge of techniques and materials ; he must understand the simple language of print and be able to communicate with printers in terms of specifications, of quantitative and descriptive data, for subjective expressions are almost valueless. And above all, he should care.

Any book that is controlled by one person who has taken all the decisions and so ensured co-ordination of production will be superior to one that is pushed haphazardly through the factory. That is the next step that needs to be taken in this country, the step that will lead to maturity in design and the establishment of a real standard of quality.

Such books, it must be understood, need not show excessive decoration and illustration, nor need the appearance be fanciful and exotic : these are not the characteristics of fine books. On the contrary, the experienced designer tends to underplay his hand, to whisper rather than to scream, to concentrate on simple readability above all other attributes. But the paper he selects will be a good colour with high opacity and with the grain running the right way ; the type will be legible and well positioned ; the press work will be immaculate ; the binding tasteful as well as efficient. And the 'feel' of the book, its flexibility and weight, will be a matter for careful experimentation at the early stages. The various proportions involved in book design will be studied, and controlled.

If and when we as readers want something more than jerry-built bricks or furniture, more even than good commercials, we must appeal to printers and publishers to nominate their designer and to give him a free hand within the cost framework laid down. We may then expect to receive the books we deserve.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COMMUNICATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR LIBRARIES

R. F. M. IMMELMAN

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Part II

The Implications of Communication for Libraries

In considering to what extent the field of mass communication is of concern to librarians, it would be as well to remind ourselves at the outset that the various new media of communication are not a threat to printed matter, but that on the contrary they are all to a large extent *complementary rather than mutually exclusive* or antagonistic.¹ Each medium in its own way, and in particular, has an appeal to a certain class of society, stimulating the interest of people along different lines and in different ways. As librarians we must at the same time bear in mind the very important fact that the habitual book reader also reads more magazines, sees more films and looks at more newspapers than the non-book reader. The mass media too in their general *accessibility* and *universality* act as reminders to librarians and booksellers that our system of book distribution has lagged far behind that of the other media. Might they not be pointing the road for us? Leigh draws attention to the fact that American librarians are not the chief distributors of books read by Americans, because two-thirds of the books read, are distributed through commercial channels.²

The Public Library Inquiry survey showed that only one-quarter of the books read were from public libraries.³ Using the Inquiry's *definition of a public library user as someone who borrows at least one or more volumes per month*, it is estimated that public library users form only about 10 per cent of the adult population, or if the basis be taken as someone who borrows only one book per annum, then the public library borrowers are only 18 per cent of the adults. The people who make up the regular library users (i.e. the 10 per cent) do not all use the library with the same degree of frequency. Here public libraries and book reading differ from other communication media. The use of the radio and looking at newspapers are much more regular habits than use of libraries or reading of books.⁴ There is a greater concentration of book use than of the other media: about one-tenth of the users (who themselves are 10 per cent of the adult population) account for half the book reading in the community and 10 per cent of readers borrow one-third of the books circulated per year, while 20 per cent are responsible for three-quarters of the books issued each year. That is, a minority of 10 per cent of adult library users are the real library fans constituting a larger proportion of total library users than radio and film fans represent in their total audiences.

¹ Waples, D., Berelson, B. & Bradshaw, F. R. What reading does to people. University of Chicago Press. 1940. Distribution of publications. p. 44-61.

² Link, H. C. & Hopf, H. A. People and books, a study of reading and book-buying habits. New York Book Manufacturers' Institute, 1946. pp. 55-130.

³ Leigh, *op. cit.* p. 31.

⁴ Berelson, *op. cit.* p. 125-129.

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Taking children also into account we can state that one-third of the children and one-tenth of the adults use the library (use being defined as borrowing at least one or more books per month). Only a small minority of the total population thus can be considered regular library users. This does not imply that library users are an unimportant minority or that public library service should be considered an unimportant part of the whole machinery of public communication. It does mean however, that quantitatively the commercial media are reaching many more people with books than libraries are doing.¹

The methods used by commercial media for mass marketing deserve more attention from librarians than they are getting.² I refer to frequency, accessibility, shaping of content, zealous promotion and personalising. Celebrity-building or personalising has a wide appeal to the marginal reader, besides which this concentration of book and mass magazine publishers on publicising certain books affects libraries directly, as a demand for current books is created in the library. Although libraries often select books other than best-sellers for their stock, yet library promotion of its selection is a mere whisper compared to the commercial media's roar, which to a very considerable extent determines the library's selection of current books. Then again librarians should remember that the content of the mass media tends to stress the accepted, the popular, the well-known, the classics, e.g. the radio tends to stress the few very famous works of well-known composers, but hardly ever touches their lesser-known works or unknown and experimental works of newcomers. The same is true of the publishers of gramophone records. There are exceptions of course, but generally speaking this is true of most of the mass media. As we discovered earlier³ "the available evidence, then, indicates that in spite of the huge volume and the great reach of the commercial (i.e. mass) agencies of public communication their actual effect on opinion, attitude, and belief, as well as on factual information is limited. Apparently in most cases the commercial agencies serve popular interests more than transform them, reinforce widespread attitudes and opinions rather than reverse them".⁴

In the light therefore of the incomplete task of communication as carried out by the mass agencies, one begins to discern the natural and appropriate role of the public library in society to-day. The library must not attempt to compete with them, but far rather provide kinds and qualities of service that the mass media are not equipped to give.⁵ The public library's natural rôle as an agency of public communication is to serve as large a proportion of that group of adults whose interests, will and ability cause them to search for personal enrichment and enlightenment. Furthermore, the library can add to that by co-operating with other agencies of education, e.g. adult education. We must bear in mind that there is a close correlation between formal education and use of the library by adults. On the whole the library's users have had more schooling, have larger collections of books in their homes, read more magazines, see more films and listen to more serious broadcasts

¹ Melcher, F. G. Books and the business of communication. *Publishers' Weekly*, 12 Aug., 1950, p. 686.

² Gitler, R. L. The printed word will stay, *Library Journal*, 1 March 1950, p. 376-79.

³ Leigh. *op. cit.* p. 46.

⁴ Waples, Berelson & Bradshaw. *op. cit.* p. 32-43.

⁵ Tompkins, Miriam D. New tools for adult education. In *Adult education activities for public libraries* by Carl Thomsen, Edward Sydney and Miriam D. Tompkins. Unesco, 1950. p. 68-72.

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than the average of all adults. In fact from the Public Library Inquiry survey it is shown that the public library users are predominantly those who serve voluntarily on all levels as leaders of opinion and culture in their communities. Pursuit of interests is open to everybody in any community, but their intensive cultivation is carried on only by interested and changing minorities, large or small. But in this way the whole community's cultural interests are served indirectly when excellent library service to these groups is available.

Library Service in Relation to the Mass Media

But now I want to turn to the problem of the library's relation to the mass media themselves.¹ That is, the modern library must consider how it can co-operate *indirectly* with the radio,² the cinema and the press in its community and *directly*, how it can itself utilise the film,³ the gramophone, the filmstrip and other newer media. Of course, the library may initiate activities itself and by its observations of the communication processes learn how to adapt the techniques and methods of the mass media to its own use. The documentary film and the discussion group supplement each other very well; similarly the gramophone in combination with a lecturer or discussion group;⁴ and the reading of a play followed by drama recordings or films of dramatic performances. Let us remember that the spoken word plus visual presentation has a more lasting effect than using one medium alone. Then again, the radio can often be more closely related with library activities and a specific programme be supplemented by the gramophone, or the film or discussion. People need face-to-face contact as well as the stimulus from the medium of mass communication.

The library in the local community should be more continuously conscious of the part that the radio, the cinema and the newspaper play in people's lives. Displays of books in the library or book-lists made available on current topics or related to current programmes are obvious ways in which many librarians already co-operate with such media.

It may however be felt by some colleagues that this is nothing new or startling: why therefore go so far afield? It should however be pointed out that the library is going to have to concern itself very much more with the whole field of communication and to regard itself as one of the non-commercial institutions concerned with public communications. The library has always devoted its attention to print: to-day it must begin to concern itself with all forms of record, with films, gramophone records, microfilms, lantern slides, radio scripts, film strips, wire recordings, pictorial reproductions, etc. Not only the collection of all types of material is the library's concern, but also the problem of providing information and service to users by every possible way of exploiting such media.

Librarians, in my opinion, need to study many more of the studies relating to radio

¹ McGuire, A. B. Our developing communications. *Wilson Library Bulletin*, Nov. 1950, p. 237-241.

² Hyers, F. H. The library and the radio. University of Chicago Press, 1939.

³ McDonald, G. D. Educational motion pictures and libraries. *A.L.A.*, Chicago, 1942.

⁴ Martin, Lowell. Group reading as a library project. *Library Journal* 15 May, 1946, p. 734-739.

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listeners, cinema audiences¹ and newspaper² readers in order to get a clearer picture of reading³ as a channel of communication; of the reading audience⁴ and the reader himself; of reading habits and the effects⁵ of reading.⁶ I recommend to your attention as a most important professional contribution to this subject, Dr. Robert Leigh's 3rd chapter entitled "The Business of Communication" in his book "The Public Library in the United States", published about a year ago, in the "Public Library Inquiry Reports" series. The study of the communication habits and interests of the citizens of our communities will surely reward the librarian by opening up new possibilities of service. In this connection, it is important that we as librarians should regard the media of mass communication as complementary and not as competitive or antagonistic to libraries. If we can view the library as one of several institutions all concerned with different aspects of the same basic problem of communication, I think libraries have a better opportunity of adjusting themselves to modern social conditions. We then need to think of libraries in the larger setting of the entire communication process.

In so doing, we may have to revise our ideas on book selection, the library's services to social groups,⁷ the scope and nature of the library's information services, the library's exact role in adult education, and in other ways. Consequently, the library becomes a real centre for the dissemination of information, for the distribution of knowledge, for furthering aesthetic enjoyment and for the communication of ideas. To bear out this point I cannot do better than to quote the following passage by Hogben: "The challenge of the comic is the stupendous popularity of the picture as a competitor of the printed word; and the reason why it is a challenge is that formal education still relies largely on the printed or spoken word as the medium of instruction . . ."

"The present writer does not lightly dismiss the use of visual aids as a device for stimulating an appetite for information easily surfeited by the printed word, especially at an age when there is no preformed habit of rapid reading to satisfy with intellectual advantage an eager curiosity . . ."⁸ On reviewing the characteristics of the commercial agencies of communication, one comes to the conclusion that they leave undone, or touch only slightly, services which are indispensable for the health of society. I want to close by quoting Dr. Leigh's view⁹ of how the library fits into this picture: "The unperformed tasks would seem to constitute the uniquely appropriate functions for non-commercial agencies of communication, of which the public library is one. They are:

1. To serve as centers for contemporary materials selected from each year's output

¹ Wilson, E. C. The listening audience [of the radio]. In: Communications in modern society. *op. cit.* p. 116-125.

² Nafziger, R. O. The reading audience [of newspapers]. *Ibid.* p. 101-115.

³ Waples, D. People and print. University of Chicago Press, 1938. p. 43-48, 145-182.

⁴ Berelson, B. The public library, book reading and political behaviour. *Library Quarterly*, Oct. 1945, p. 281-299.

⁵ Campbell, A. & Metzner, C. A. Public use of the library and other sources of information. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 1950 (Institute for Social Research).

⁶ van der Heijden, P. M. Een korte sociaal psychologische beschouwing over Openbare Lees-zalen en Vrijtijdsbesteding. *Biblioteekleven*, Oct. 1949, p. 251-263.

⁷ Immelman, R. F. M. The Library in the life of the community to-day. II: [community organizations and the library]. *South African Libraries*, April 1951, p. 103-112.

⁸ Hogben, L. *op. cit.* p. 231.

⁹ Leigh, R. *op. cit.* p. 50-51.

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by the judgment of experts as the most reliable and authoritative, including artistic products of merit as determined by competent critics; and the promotion of the use of such materials by all available means.

2. To serve as centers where materials selected to give adequate and balanced representation to new, critical, often unpopular ideas, and to the preclassical, contemporary, unusual, and experimental in the arts can be brought into full use.

3. To serve as centers for the selection, organization, and promotion of the use of materials which are not new, but of great current relevance because of their enduring quality.

4. To serve as centers of selection, collection, and organization of the whole range of valuable materials in the form of print, record and film, in such a way as to focus the full resources of record quickly and easily on a particular subject or problem for those seeking such a service.

These four functions are not likely to be performed adequately or at all by the commercial media, characterized as they are by large volume and maximum coverage of the population. It is clear that the functions are not justified by the numbers of people reached so much as by the socially-valuable interests which they serve. They are functions which are made more rather than less necessary by the very flood of materials produced and distributed by commercial means. They seem, moreover, to be functions especially appropriate for performance by the library as a public institution."

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OBITUARY

SAMUEL BERNARD ASHER

The late Mr. S. B. Asher, who died on 24th December, 1951, was Librarian of the Johannesburg Public Library from 1911 until his retirement in 1936. He was a foundation member of the South African Library Association, a member of the provisional committee set up in 1928 to form the Association, a member of the Council of the Association from 1930 to 1936 and a member of the first Education Sub-Committee.

He was generally regarded by his colleagues on the Council of the Association as a "difficult" man and by this was meant a man whose principles often differed from those of his fellows, who was determined and uncompromising, and who often achieved his end by sheer tenacity. He was convinced that the first and principal object of the Association in this country should be 'to promote the establishment of public *free* libraries in South Africa'. He was successful in having free libraries mentioned in the constitution but his proposals that membership of the Association should be restricted to Europeans and that the Association should be legally incorporated were not adopted.

As Librarian of the Johannesburg Public Library he was not popular. He was determined that J. P. L. should become a scholarly library and that there should be no pandering to the continual demand for light reading. Having had no library training or previous experience he was a fairly easy target for those who differed from him and he spent the first half of his long period of office in warfare with those who would have the Library a popular library. The second half of his term was spent in struggles with the opponents of the site of the present Central Library.

Always fighting a lone hand he achieved much. He persuaded the governing body of the subscription library to purchase the Strange Collection of Africana, with a grant from the Witwatersrand Council of Education; he persuaded the Trustees of the Seymour Memorial Library to transfer that collection to the Public Library; and he persuaded the Art Gallery Committee to allow the Library to have the Michaelis Art Collection. He prevailed upon the subscribers to hand over their assets to the Town Council in 1924 so that the Library could become free; and it was due to his perseverance that the new Library Building was erected on its present site. By starving the lending library, he succeeded in building up a first-rate reference library, paying particular attention to sets of periodicals, blue-books and the more expensive standard works of reference.

Overcoming strong and continued opposition — opposition to the man as much as to his proposals — and surmounting tremendous obstacles — often of his own planting — he achieved for his Library probably more than any other South African librarian before him. He left an easy task for his successor.

R. F. K.

SPECIAL LIBRARIES SECTION

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THE UNITED KINGDOM INFORMATION OFFICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Information Offices are now an established branch of Government Service abroad. The diplomatic representative is the link between Governments — the Information Office is the link between peoples, and its purpose is to tell one country about another, and to bring the peoples of these countries closer together in knowledge and understanding of their respective ways of life.

The United Kingdom Information Office in Johannesburg has several ways of telling the South African public about the people in Britain. Broadly speaking they narrow down to the following channels: press and photographs library, film library and display material, reference library and publications.

Press and Photographs

Our press work covers a wide variety of activities, ranging from the organization of news conferences to the straightforward distribution of the latest pictures of Prince Charles.

The materials sent to newspapers and magazines include feature articles, news items, background material, "second rights," photographs, mats, stereos and specialised technical, industrial and scientific articles.

Several basic principles are followed in relations with the press.

Firstly, it is recognized that a press service is a means of communicating information and not a means of withholding it; secondly, that any story requested by a journalist, or any query made by him, is treated as being exclusive to his paper; and, thirdly, taking into account the difficulties of communication, every effort is made to match the speed of service required — and achieved — by staffs in newspaper offices.

The main foundation of the press work is a daily supply of about 8,000 words, reaching the office by wireless from London. It is not

a news service in the ordinary sense but rather a background picture and general commentary.

Called the "London Press Service", it is made up of seven different programmes — press extracts, a feature article on current affairs, political, general, diplomatic, industrial and official statements.

This L. P. S. material is distributed throughout the Union to newspapers according to their special needs, and also provides subedited copy for the Information Office Bulletins sent to all editors on "World Affairs", "Industry", and "The Arts".

Items are also taken from the services to make up an "Africa in the News" Bulletin, which each week provides a spotlight on the affairs and personalities of Africa as they appear before the Commonwealth and the world.

The popular feature article service provides authentic up-to-the-minute pieces by some of the world's most famous journalists, including Wickham Steed, Richard Scott (diplomatic correspondent of the "Manchester Guardian" and grandson of C. P. Scott), Sebastian Haffner, of the "Observer", H. V. Hodson, Editor of the London "Sunday Times," and other Fleet Street stars.

Many other articles are specially commissioned at the request of Union editors.

There is another aspect of press work — photographs. Over the years it has been possible to build up one of the most extensive photograph libraries in the Union, and to-day some 35,000 different prints can provide a complete picture of life in Britain — and in many of the colonies, too.

Many papers, particularly in the smaller centres, do not have block-making equipment, but this obstacle is overcome by the provision of mats and stereos, which enable them to provide illustrations to news of current events.

SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES

Considering the size of the Union, it is difficult to maintain personal contact with the press and the unattainable ideal would be an office in each of the main centres.

Still, at present it all adds up to the fact that each day of the year editors decide to print some 40 items of our material.

The second category of information material, films, is somewhat simpler to manage. The "private" cinema has become increasingly popular in the Union during the last few years: South Africa is indeed a very film-minded country.

Our film library holds a stock of nearly 500 titles and over 1,500 prints. The subjects range from building ships to saving coal: from ballet to the police force.

In addition, we hold a number of specialized medical films which are not available to the general public but are in constant use as training films in the medical schools and hospitals.

All these films have been officially sponsored, i.e., they have been made for one or other of the British Government departments.

All film borrowers must become members of the library and may only show films to non-paying audiences. Films are lent, free of charge, to schools of all types, universities, colleges, parent teacher associations, clubs and societies all over the Union, as well as to municipal and government departments.

The work of the film library has grown enormously since 1946. The number of members has grown from nil to nearly 1,000 and new members join at an average rate of about 5 a week. The monthly average of film lendings has increased from 115 in 1946 to 450 in 1951, with an approximate audience total of between 35,000 and 40,000.

Display material, the third "channel", is a matter of simple distribution. It consists of picture sets — 12 to 20 captioned photographs telling a particular story, and posters.

Then there are Exhibitions — displays of various types on various subjects such as Book Design, Industrial Design, Women and their Work, Education etc. These are usually put on in collaboration with some local body —

the Library, The South African Association of Arts, the Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and so on.

Reference Library

The Reference Library has a two-fold function: (1) *Question and Answer*: The Library answers questions by telephone, letter or personal interview. These come in with an astonishing variety and it is clearly impossible to cover 'all knowledge' on the United Kingdom and Colonies in the contents of one small Library. Many questions can easily be answered at once, others need a certain amount of research and the answer is found to consulting books and other reference material in the Library. In some cases, however, the enquiry must be referred to London, by airmail or cable according to its urgency. In no case do we refuse to accept an enquiry that comes legitimately within our field.

(2) *Publications*: The Library circulates throughout the Union British Government official publications and other pamphlets to the press, schools and universities, central and local Government departments, business organizations, libraries, and to individuals, according to their various interests and occupations. So far we have no sales organization and the circulation is done only on a complimentary basis — which means that we cannot act as an agency for obtaining special publications on request. But we are prepared to send regularly to any enquirer the monthly list of British Government Publications, with instructions on the most convenient way of obtaining them direct from H.M.S.O.

We draw particular attention to the three *Surveys on Home, Commonwealth and International Affairs* (the first weekly and the two latter fortnightly). These cover recent developments in their respective fields, and are bound in folders under subject headings — thus giving a concise record on almost any subject of current interest in the United Kingdom, Commonwealth and International Affairs. In our own Library we find these *Surveys* invaluable for reference, and we hope they are equally useful to others.

SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES

UNITED KINGDOM INFORMATION SECTION, SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARY, CAPE TOWN.

The nucleus of this section is a collection of books on various aspects of British life and thought. They are recent books, published during the past five years, although some, like Trevelyan's "English Social History", are later editions of standard works. These are augmented by periodicals and pamphlet material on a variety of subjects.

The most popular feature is the air mail edition of several English newspapers, and in the mornings, especially, this section often takes on the aspect of a London club!

Government affairs are well covered by a steady flow of H.M.S.O. publications, most important of which are the Command Papers, which are not readily available elsewhere in the Cape. There is also a comprehensive section on the Colonies, with books by such authors as Duncan Hall and W. R. Crocker. The best general information is obtainable from the Colonial Annual Reports, which,

together with pamphlets and periodicals, like the "New Commonwealth" and "Corona", enable the library to keep an up-to-date record of colonial affairs.

Students who intend going overseas for further study, find the university calendars useful, and can also learn details of scholarships, educational exchanges and student accommodation, while for the tourist there are lists of hotels, road maps, suggested tours and timetables, with information on the main events of the coming year.

The stock of books, government documents, pamphlets and periodicals, is supplied by the United Kingdom office in Johannesburg. The South African Library provides a part-time library assistant, and the stock is catalogued and administered as part of the Reference Department. The United Kingdom Information Section is open each weekday from 10 a.m. till 5 p.m.

LIBRARIANS AND UNESCO

A useful summary entitled 'What UNESCO is doing for librarians the world over', by Dr. Herbert Coblans, Librarian of the University of Natal, appears in the February, 1952 issue of the *Stechert-Hafner Book News*. Dr. Coblans draws attention to the concrete achievements of this international organization, showing that it has not only inherited the work of the "Institut International de Coopération Intellectuelle" (as, for instance, by preparing a new edition of the important *Index Bibliographicus*), but has taken the lead in many other directions. Pilot projects, such as the public library demonstration scheme at Delhi; the invention and admin-

istration of UNESCO book-coupons to overcome difficulties of foreign exchange; and the publication of the *Unesco Bulletin for Libraries*, making possible regular communication between the Libraries Division and the eight thousand libraries which receive it in all parts of the world. These are three only of the tasks which have been not only thought out, but put into highly effective practice. Finally, Dr. Coblans selects seventeen of the most important publications made possible through UNESCO in the past two or three years. They make an impressive record.

SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S LIBRARY SECTION

South African Library Association

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

D. M. TURNER

"The lowest ideal to be aimed at must be 'No school without a suitable library,' and teachers and inspectors are counselled to keep such an ideal steadily in view." This admirable precept is one which all of us endorse and would like to impress upon education authorities throughout the Union. Into it may be read all that school library enthusiasts have been, and still are, striving for; and our one regret is that the educational powers-that-be — those who hold the purse-strings and determine the policy of the education departments — are not exhorted, as are their servants, the teachers and inspectors, "to keep such an ideal steadily in view."

The quotation, as applicable to-day as when it was written, is taken from the 1896 report of Sir Thomas Muir, Superintendent-General of Education at the Cape, and it shows clearly that the aims and ideals of teachers and librarians to-day are not nearly as modern and revolutionary as they are usually taken to be.

Sir Thomas Muir, "the father of school libraries" as Dr. de Vos Malan calls him, was Superintendent-General of Education from 1892 to 1915, and during his term of office school libraries from being almost unheard of (there were only 22 in the whole province in 1892) became more or less the general rule (when he retired the province possessed no fewer than 2,257 school libraries). Sir Thomas was the first, indeed one might say the most library-minded educational leader this country has known. He tackled the problem of school libraries almost as soon as he arrived in the country. As early as 1893 he introduced the well-known £ for £ grants for the purchase of library books, and sent out his first pamphlet on libraries, which included a list of recommended books. He made useful contacts with publishers overseas,

which enabled him to buy books at reduced rates, and, inspired by his efforts, several influential personalities made considerable donations in aid of school libraries. If only his successors had been equally library-minded one feels that his ideals might easily have been reached. He left us such excellent foundations to build on, and, compared with the rate of progress in those first 23 years, we do not seem to have advanced very far since then.

School library service consists of four indispensable ingredients, books, space to keep them in, librarians to administer them and time in which to use them. It seems that such progress as has been made has, until recently, been almost exclusively concerned with the first ingredient, the books. Books are of course more easily provided than rooms, staff and time; but until determined efforts are made to solve these other problems, the efficiency of school libraries, indeed the claim that schools have *libraries*, can never be established.

Throughout the Union the Provinces have followed the lead of Sir Thomas Muir and introduced the £ for £ grant — in the Transvaal in 1910 or thereabouts, in the Free State (where it has developed into £2 for £1) slightly later and finally in Natal in 1944. During the depression, of course the grants were cut altogether but they were re-introduced in the late '30s. Although it may be argued that £ for £ grants have the virtue of encouraging individual effort, few would defend a policy which made this type of grant the only aid to the supply of library books. It is an almost perfect illustration of the Biblical "to him that hath shall be given" and, of necessity, the very schools which need aid most are, through this system, given least.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES IN S.A.

Realising this, the Education Departments are doing their utmost to provide further aid. The Transvaal Education Department began by introducing an initial free grant to schools, starting libraries, and in 1946 this grant was supplemented by an annual one for all schools, based on the enrolment. In Natal, together with the £ for £ grant the Department introduced in 1944 a free annual grant of 6d. per European pupil. In 1949 this grant was extended to Coloured schools and in 1951 it was raised to 1s. 3d. per pupil up to Std. III and 2s. 6d. for pupils above this class, and Indian schools were also included.

Another form of Departmental assistance in regard to the supply of library books grew out of the enterprise of some East Rand school principals who decided in 1918 to pool their resources and circulate their stock. The Germiston (Carnegie) Public Library agreed to act as clearing house, and the Department gave a grant of 8d. per pupil. Soon the West Rand schools, some in Vereeniging and one in Sabie were joining in, and the Departmental grant was changed to 7d. The depression of 1931 found the T. E. D. unable to continue this grant; and though the schools tried gallantly to keep the scheme going by collecting 4d. a year from each pupil, it ultimately had to be abandoned, as the erratic and dwindling amounts they were able to collect were insufficient to maintain the stock of books.

In 1935 the scheme was revived as the Transvaal Schools Libraries Scheme, and the T. E. D. made an outright grant which finally became £1,000 per year to the Germiston Library. Boxes of books all ready to be issued were sent by post to schools, and principals were free to exchange them either in small batches, as and when they pleased, or as entire collections during school holidays. In 1937, 53 schools were being served and this number grew to over one hundred.

Johannesburg schools, somewhat inexplicably, were always excluded from this scheme; and since all efforts failed to persuade the Department either to include them, or to give the Johannesburg Public Library some form of assistance to provide a similar service for schools in this City, the City Council eventually agreed to take on the burden entirely. Accordingly the Johannesburg Schools Libra-

ries Scheme, financed by the City Council and administered as part of the Children's Library came into being in 1936. It was open to all European and Coloured primary and junior high schools. (High schools were not catered for since their resources have always been greater than primary schools). This scheme is rather different from most other circulating schemes in that, instead of calling the books in during the holidays, the Children's Librarian and an assistant spend two mornings a week in term time visiting schools to take stock of their books. Each school is visited once a year, and a batch of new books is taken to replace losses and withdrawals. In this way the work is distributed over the school year instead of accumulating during the holidays, while the first-hand knowledge of conditions in the individual school, as well as the personal contact between library and school staffs are of great benefit.

Durban Public Library started a similar scheme in 1939, helped by a very small grant from the Province. Here the books are collected and exchanged during school holidays.

The State Library, Pretoria, also serves local schools and here the Province provides a Children's Librarian, a qualified teacher who is paid by the Education Department.

In the Cape and Orange Free State there are no comparable schemes, though various cultural bodies including the O. F. S. Teachers' Association and the Cape Branch of the S.A.L.A. have at different times provided circulating libraries which have helped to keep schools supplied with books. Two districts in the Cape have emulated the early experiment of the East Rand Schools and pooled their resources to form circulating libraries; and wherever this occurs statistics show that the average number of books read per pupil is considerably higher than in other parts of the province.

The Jagger Bequest also helps in the supply of books to school libraries. In terms of the will of the late J. W. Jagger the interest on £20,000 is devoted to the purchase of English books for S. A. high school libraries. The bequest is administered by the Governing Body of Diocesan College, Rondebosch, and results in each S. A. high school receiving £7 worth of specially bound books every 4 years.

The T. E. D. has recently introduced a

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book-binding scheme which will help tremendously by making books, which previously would have been discarded, serviceable. Schools may send in a specified number of books each year based on the use they make of their library grants, and the books are bound locally.

While it is true that no school should now lack library books since there are so many different channels through which either books themselves or grants for their purchase may be obtained, it is, unfortunately, also true that a surprising number of schools are still apparently so uninterested in their libraries that they do not even bother to claim their grants. In many cases also the selection of books has been, to say the least of it, extremely haphazard. One feels that many school libraries, like Topsy, "just grew" and it is by no means uncommon to find collections consisting largely of shabby Christmas annuals and the like, obviously cast-offs from family libraries which have landed in the school library as "gifts". Worse still, occasionally one comes across books in a school library which are entirely unsuitable for children. Two examples should suffice (a) Negley Farson's "Way of a Transgressor" which was found in an Afrikaans Medium primary school and (b) „Geslagsiekties" which has recently, I am glad to say, been expelled from a High School library. In this connection the report of the 1937 Interdepartmental Committee on Libraries in South Africa has the following comment to make: "Though the majority of South African schools possess book collections these are in general of very inferior quality, and the use of the library is seldom made an integral portion of the regular school work."

There is, of course, no doubt that the problem of book selection is being solved, as more teachers are being trained in library work, and Education Departments and libraries are issuing more recommended lists of books. The training of the school librarian is a matter in which a number of bodies have exerted themselves from comparatively early days. Sir Thomas Muir's pamphlets again come to mind as the first known example of teacher training in librarianship; then in 1928 the Carnegie Corporation awarded grants of 2,500 dollars each for a "School Library Demonstration" in Natal and in the Free

State. In collaboration with the Training College the Johannesburg Public Library instituted a short course in librarianship for teachers in training. The first course was held in 1937 and until the Normal College librarian took over in 1946 final year students regularly come down to the Public Library for these lectures. A proposed whole-time, intensive course of a year for experienced teachers quite understandably failed, since would-be applicants found that they could not afford to take a year's unpaid leave.

Vacation courses for teacher librarians have several times been held, in Cape Town by the School of Librarianship in 1941, later by the S.A.L.A. in Bloemfontein, and finally, the first officially run by an Education Department itself, at Potchefstroom, in 1949.

Two short courses for teachers have been run by the Johannesburg Public Library, in 1941 in collaboration with the School and Children's Library Section, and again in 1948.

The appointment by the T. E. D. of trained librarians to the 4 normal colleges in 1946, followed by the appointment of a School Library organizer (Miss Greenberg seconded to the position in 1947), and Mrs. E. C. de Wet appointed permanently in 1948) gave a lead to the whole country. Teacher training, improvements in grants, and the beginning of a policy which would provide library equipment, furniture and even rooms soon followed; and, providing the necessary supply of staff and funds for buildings are forthcoming, the next few years should see tremendous changes in the school library world. In 1951 the School Library Organizer was given a staff of 6 including 2 trained librarians. This staff will now take charge of the T. E. D. library in Pretoria and supervise the work of school and college libraries in the Transvaal — working, of course, under the Organizer.

Natal followed Transvaal's lead in 1950 when Miss H. M. Hurley was appointed as Library Organizer to the Education Department. In the Free State, steps are being taken to bring assistance to the schools through the Provincial Library system. It seems probable that the Provincial libraries will undertake to provide collections of books in the schools while the Organizer and his staff will be prepared to assist and advise teachers in their problems.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S LIBRARIES IN S.A.

It has often been pointed out that no school library can be really efficient unless there is a member of staff, preferably with specialized training to take charge of it. It has been suggested that where it is not possible to appoint a full-time teacher-librarian, a compromise might be reached either by appointing one teacher-librarian to serve two or more schools, or by arranging the timetable in such a way that the teacher responsible for the library is freed from some class teaching to do library work. More and more educationists are becoming conscious of the need to train children in the systematic use of books, quite apart from trying to inculcate the reading habit; this training must be part of the school curriculum and much of it can best be taken by the teacher librarian. In quite a number of schools the teacher in charge of the library is exempted from other extra-mural duties; in some cases the timetable is so arranged that each class has one or more library periods taken by the School Librarian, and in a few privileged schools there are actually full time librarians, some of whom hold S.A.L.A. certificates. Amongst these are Observatory Boys' High in the Cape where the librarian is voluntary, Grey College, Bloemfontein which has an A.S.A.L.A. in full charge and Durban Boys' High which has recently persuaded the Education Department to appoint a full-time librarian for its new war-memorial library.

These are encouraging signs and one cannot help feeling that these isolated cases must be the fore-runners of a general move to get teacher librarians appointed in all schools. While the supply of teachers is so much smaller than the demand, it can hardly be hoped that our ideal will be quickly attained. On the other hand, possibly a move to supply librarians in the schools might result in easing the teacher shortage. The position of teacher-librarian might attract people who would not otherwise consider teaching; school librarians, who were not trained teachers, might be used; and each school librarian appointed would certainly lighten the burden of the ordinary teaching staff in some schools.

The provision of adequate library premises is another problem to which until very recently little attention has been paid by education authorities. Most large high schools are equip-

ped with library rooms, but the primary school has been sadly neglected, and normally its books are housed in a staff room, stock-room, a cupboard in a hall, classroom or passage; or even in the class cupboard along with chalks, pencils and exercise books. Some enterprising schools have built their own libraries from funds collected wholly or partly by parents and teachers. In some cases the province has contributed a portion of the cost. In other cases small classrooms or cloakrooms have been converted into libraries with varying success. In Natal schools have been encouraged to erect libraries as war memorials — the province contributing up to £2,000 on a £ for £ basis. All these efforts are admirable as examples of individual enterprise and enthusiasm, but, since the school library is acknowledged to be an "integral part of the school" why should it not be provided in the same way as art rooms, science laboratories, playing fields and all the rest of the "essential" equipment of a school? True, in the Transvaal and Free State all new schools are to have library rooms provided, but what of the thousands of established schools which are forced to make do, contrive or go without? They are every bit as much the responsibility of the Education authorities and it is time some attention was given to them.

The provision of reading material and facilities for children in public libraries is on the whole a recent development, and varies tremendously where it does exist, from a shelf or two of unattractive shabby looking books in the adult lending library, to a large, attractive, highly organized department run by a specially qualified children's librarian, in some of the great city libraries.

To Durban probably belongs the honour of being the pioneer in the children's library field. In 1913 a couple of shelves in the lending library constituted the junior library. A separate children's room was achieved as early as 1919 and since then its story has been one of steady progress and outgrowing its premises. There were several moves before the present pleasant room in the City Hall became the Junior Library. Up to 1937 children paid an annual subscription of 4s. but thereafter although the adult library was still run on a subscription basis the junior library became

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completely free and the membership increased from 4,008 in 1937, to over 12,000 in 1946.

The Children's Librarian in Durban has always been a qualified teacher, and close co-operation with schools is a special feature. Apart from the Schools Libraries Scheme, the Junior Library organizes a series of lessons which are given by appointment to classes which visit the library for that purpose. Visits to schools, radio talks, book-reviewing for a children's magazine and examining Scouts and Guides for their Readers Badge are other ways in which the Librarian enters into the interests of teachers and children.

Johannesburg was possibly the next in the field. The earliest mention of books for children occurs in 1898 when a donation of £10 for the purchase of children's books was recorded. In 1907 only 63 children were members and in 1921 the children's library consisted of a few tiers of books in the adult library and issues were about 20 per day. In 1922 a separate room was made available, the stock was ruthlessly weeded, fresh books were bought, and the Children's Library proper started with a bookstock of 2,000. The move into the new building in 1935, and the appointment of the first Children's Librarian at the same time, were the next milestones. From then on there was rapid progress. The Schools Scheme started in 1936, the travelling library and the first branches sprang up, the deposit system was entirely done away with in 1940 and then came the war which almost halted progress in many ways. To-day children are served in the Central Library where the membership is between 4,500 and 5,000, two travelling libraries, 6 European branches, 4 Non-European branches and about 100 schools.

An interesting development in Johannesburg has been the growth of the School and Children's Library Section of the S. Trvl. Banch of the S.A.L.A. which was started in 1939, and has been very much a part of the Children's Library ever since. It has always been a most active body, and from it have sprung not only similar sections attached to the Cape and Northern Transvaal Branches, but the Inter High School Librarians' Sub-Section — a lively organization whose members are all pupils in the senior forms of Johannesburg High Schools. Between them the School and

Children's Library Sections have done a great deal to make schools library-conscious, to encourage co-operation between schools and public libraries and to bring school library problems to the attention of the authorities.

The Bloemfontein Children's Library really started to grow in 1934 when the momentous decision was taken to abolish the subscription of 6d. per month and allow children to join on the strength of a properly competed form. It was an uphill battle, for there were no funds, no room and no special staff. An alcove in the main library was screened off and attractively decorated and books were obtained in all sorts of ways. A street collection was held, scouts volunteered to collect unwanted books from donors and various cultural bodies gave donations. The response both from book donors and would-be readers was enormous, and it was not long before a separate room had to be provided. Until 1937 there was no special staff for the Children's Library but in that year a part-time assistant was appointed. From 1942 the Assistant Librarian acted as Children's Librarian also, until 1947 when the first full-time Children's Librarian was appointed. All this time the Children's Library had been struggling to keep going with literally no funds except donations, the proceeds of street collection, and a very small grant varying from £25-£50 from the Education Department. In 1927 the Library became municipal and the financial problem was therefore much easier.

Special features have been story hours, a lively dramatic club, and constant efforts to arouse public interest and support through posters, essay competitions and stalls and displays at agricultural shows and so on. Lately, owing to inadequate accommodation and staff, many of these activities have had to be discontinued.

In 1939 the State Library, Pretoria, moved the usual small collection of children's books from the adult lending library to a separate room, which, from the beginning of 1940 was presided over by a teacher librarian appointed and paid by the T. E. D. Her duties were to "assist all young people visiting the State library and maintain helpful relations between the library and the schools" One year after the appointment of the first Children's Librarian the membership had more than doubled itself.

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In 1943 an assistant was appointed and the Junior Library moved to its present quarters. Help to schools included talks to visiting classes and a weekly lending service at one school.

The abolition of deposits in 1948 brought over 1,000 new members in the first 3 months. The Pretoria schools library scheme has been mentioned elsewhere. Close co-operation is maintained with the Organizer of the T. E. D. Library service and includes numerous school visits, lecturing in vacation courses and work on lists of recommended books.

Among the smaller libraries which have separate children's rooms and are worthy of mention are Krugersdorp which has a school service, and also several branches; Springs, where a delightful room is a magnet to the children; Germiston, the home of the erstwhile Transvaal Schools Library Scheme; Vereeniging, where the Children's Library has been completely free since its opening in

1935; Pietermaritzburg, which held a most successful Bookweek in 1946 and is the only Natal library, apart from Durban, which makes any serious attempt to cater for children; and finally, Wynberg, one of the bare half-dozen libraries in the Cape to have a separate children's room. Of the Cape Province, where as recently as 1940 "more than half the libraries in the Province have no facilities for children's reading" (Survey of existing libraries in 1940 and Report of Provincial Advisory Library Committee) it can only be said that a start still has to be made in the provision of library service for children.

Since it is an axiom that reading is a habit which should begin in youth, it is to be hoped that the Rural Libraries Schemes which are now getting under way will ultimately provide a network of children's libraries throughout the country. This seems the obvious way to produce a reading and thinking nation.

TO SUBSCRIBERS AND CONTRIBUTORS

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Single copies are obtainable from the Hon. Secretary, South African Library Association, P. O. Box 6, Rondebosch, C. P. Price: Members, 4/-, non-members, 5/6.

Articles not exceeding 2,500 words in length on matters relating to libraries and librarianship are invited.

Notes and news about library activities and developments, new buildings, library extension, publicity and so forth, will be welcomed.

Newspaper cuttings should be clearly marked with the name and date of the source.

Contributions which have appeared elsewhere should be marked accordingly, with an indi-

cation that permission to reprint has been granted.

The Association accepts no responsibility for opinions expressed in the Journal by its contributors.

Copy should reach the Editor at least two months before the month of publication, viz., 1 May for the July number, 1 August for the October number, 1 November for the January number, and 1 February for the April number.

Contributors are asked to note that manuscripts should be typed in double spacing with ample margins, and preferably on one side of quarto paper (10 inches by 8). Manuscripts should be carefully revised before being submitted, as corrections in type are expensive.

Books and publications of library interest, including annual reports and booklists, are welcomed for review purposes. After being reviewed, they are added to the Association's professional library at Box 397, Pretoria.

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